

LONDON SOCIETY.

MARCH 1880.

TELEGRAPHY EXTRAORDINARY.

BY AN ARTILLERY OFFICER.

FOR a month or two I had been enjoying the very problematical pleasures of a solitary station on detachment in the Garrison Artillery. To this branch of the service belong, as a rule, most of those curious erections of granite and iron which the yachting-man surveys here and there upon the out-of-the-way spots of the coast which he passes on his cruises; and which he now and then, moved by curiosity, takes the trouble of visiting, should winds and waves be propitious, to the delight of the unfortunate occupant, who has possibly not seen a soul to speak to for days or even weeks, according to circumstances. My lot it was to be stationed in one of the most remote of all these undesirable localities, the actual position of which I need not mention further, as it will be easily recognised by all who have been there, when I say that my only connection with the mainland was by a bank of deep shingle some mile and a half long, and practically impassable by sinews of average endurance; being, in fact, the nearest approximation to that road on which the traveller can only advance by walking the other way, since he slips back two feet for every

one foot forward, that I ever met with. Under these unfavourable circumstances, it may be imagined that my spirits had sunk to rather a low ebb. It was summer fortunately, and I was sitting upon the strong pier built for landing heavy stores, with a line in my hand, fishing for whatever finny monster might take a fancy to the temptingly shell-less hermit crab I was using as a bait; but the fish seemed as lazily disposed as everything else of an animate nature in the heat, and at length I was reluctantly compelled to come to the conclusion that it was of no use trying to allure them; so I resolved to pull in my line and betake myself to a book and a railway-rug on shore.

Alas for the futility of human resolutions! No sooner had I given my fishing apparatus a tug, than I became aware of the painful fact that the strong ebb-tide had drifted my hooks against one of the massive baulks of timber which stood some twenty feet or so out in the sea, supporting the movable crane whereby heavy stores were hoisted out of the holds of the War Department barges. Under the circumstances it was in vain to think of releasing

them from the shore; so, resigning myself to circumstances, I went to hunt for a boat. There was a small duck-punt on the beach belonging to one of the coast-guards, in which I was wont to paddle about the creeks in calm weather, and I speedily ran it down to the water's edge. The oars were locked up in the boat-house; but I was too lazy to go for the key, as it was an easy task to pull oneself out by means of the pier timbers, which accordingly I proceeded to do.

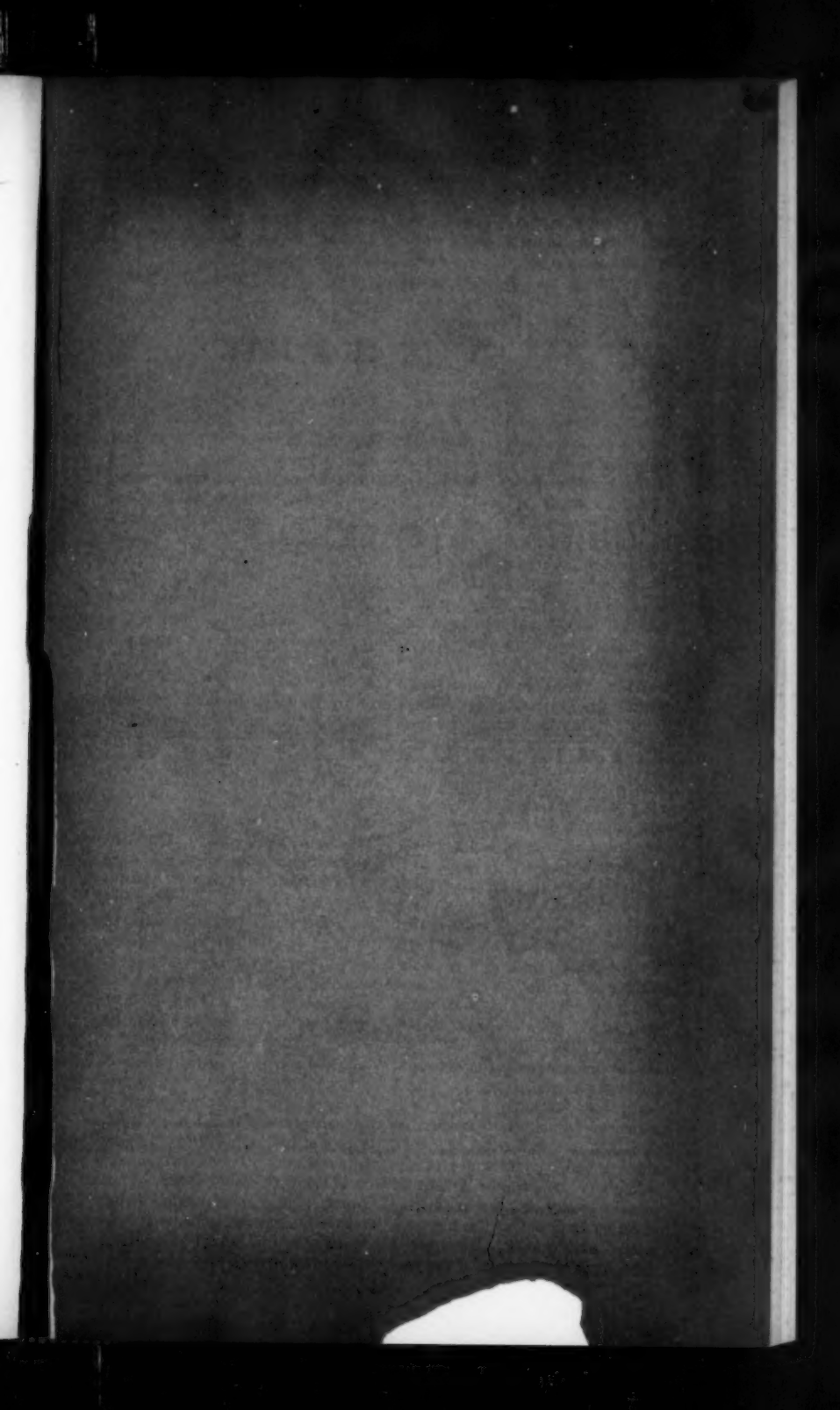
The hooks had caught rather deep in the woodwork, and I was disentangling them with one hand, whilst with the other I held on to the pier, when, either by carelessness or awkwardness, I ran one of them deeply into my finger. Involuntarily I moved my other hand to disengage it, and in an instant the tide, running like a millrace just then, swept the boat and myself away. Mechanically I made a dive for the oars, but of course remembered at once that they were not there, and that if my getting back to my castle depended on myself it was a very hopeless business.

Here was a pretty predicament certainly! I lifted up my voice and shouted lustily, in hopes that some one might hear me; but there was no one in sight, and from the direction of the current I was being carried past the front of the fort, which was occupied only by guns, all the buildings being naturally set in rear of the defences. However absurd it may seem, I own that for a moment I was rather glad than otherwise that no one had answered to my call, since I had a lively sense of the ridiculous appearance I should present to any of my men, sitting in an earless boat at the mercy of winds and waves. Moreover I thought at that season of the year

I should be safe to be picked up by some vessel or other before I had gone far.

The tide, as I had often ascertained from charts and by actual experience, ran at the rate of about six miles an hour on that part of the coast, so that I was very rapidly carried out to sea. On my involuntary voyage I saw several ships at some distance; but unfortunately my boat had been purposely built to show as little as possible above the water, and formed so inconspicuous an object that none of the vessels took any notice of me. There was nothing to wave as a signal, and I dared not stand up, as the punt was one of those proverbial craft in which, when you put a pipe in one pocket, you must put a tobacco-pouch in the other to keep the balance true.

By the time the land began to disappear in the distance, matters became very serious. If the wind or sea got up in the least it was quite certain that the boat would not live ten minutes; and even now, in the slight swell that exists on the calmest day at some distance from the shore, the motion was calculated to alarm me. Moreover the evening was drawing in; and though it was one of those days in June when the almanacs so obligingly inform us there is no real night, I knew what that meant in weather at all cloudy, and how impossible it would be for any ship to see me without a light to warn her of my presence. I turned out my pockets, and produced a pipe, a tobacco-pouch, a newspaper, and last, but not least, a box of lucifer-matches. In case of emergency I could always make a blaze with the paper, at all events; and meanwhile, being rather hungry and somewhat low-spirited, a pipe would be a solace, so I filled and lighted one.





LAST CHANCE.

See 'Telegraphy Extraordinary,' p. 111.

Whether from the soporific effects of the tobacco, or from mere inaction, my next proceeding was to drop fast asleep, lying full length in my boat, which was luckily water-tight. I must have slept for an hour or two, when I was awakened by a noise of rushing water, and nearly overturned the punt in my first start. It was almost dark; but a few hundred yards away I saw the lights of a steamer bearing down upon me, and from their position was most disagreeably aware that a collision was imminent.

'Spat' went one lucifer-match, then another and another. Lucifer-matches never will light when one is in a hurry. At length my paper blazed up, and at the same moment I uttered an ear-splitting yell, loud enough to be heard above the rushing of the screw. By this time the steamer was so near that I could hear a voice on deck cry 'Hard a-port!' and then, to my extreme relief, saw the red light swing round towards me. As she passed by a rope was flung, which I seized hold of just as my unlucky boat was caught by the swell and dragged down. In a few seconds more I was hauled on deck, after a succession of bumps up the side, which would have made me let go my hold of anything in existence—except that rope just then.

I found myself on the deck of a fine steam-yacht of about 250 tons, surrounded by a circle of faces, one of which, evidently belonging to the owner of the vessel, was familiar to me. My old school-fellow N. was not a man to be easily surprised; but he may well have been so that night at my apparition, from the depths of the ocean apparently. In fact afterwards he told me that, between the ghostly flare of the newspaper,

and the fearful shriek I had improvised for the occasion, he could expect nothing but an inhabitant of Pandemonium to arrive on board; at which remark I laughed heartily, with a secret reservation in my own mind that, at the time the thing occurred, I had not felt at all in a laughing humour.

However, 'all's well that ends well,' and to be on board of a fine steam-yacht, with an old friend for her owner, was a most agreeable change from the solitude of my castle, or from my compulsory voyage on the deep. I own it was with a sigh that, having refreshed my inner man with divers delicacies known to yachting-men in N.'s comfortable cabin, and having related my adventures for his edification, I demanded of him where he could put me on shore, so that I might return to the duties I had so involuntarily abandoned that afternoon.

N. pulled a long face.

'My dear B., I would do a good deal to oblige you, but I am bound for the Cape on most urgent business (I'll tell you the story afterwards), and really, unless we meet a homeward-bound ship, I fear you must come too, for I can't go back. I daresay you won't mind the voyage for a change, however; and if they make any fuss about it at the War Office, you can just report the facts of the case. We shall be at Cape Town in a month or six weeks at furthest, and we are sure to find some ship there that will take you back.'

I was only too glad of the excuse, and told him so, though my heart smote me a little when I thought of the anxiety my family would experience on my account. However, there was really nothing to be done but to submit myself to my fate, especially as it was so pleasant a one;

and, after a little more conversation with my old friend, I went to bed, very thankful to find myself there, instead of being in that great sepulchre that so securely holds what it receives until the day of judgment.

Next morning, when N. had shown me all the beauties of his yacht, and expatiated upon them to his heart's content, we took our easy-chairs and cigars under an awning near the stern, where the sun could not shine down on our unprotected heads; and there, sitting lazily listening to the plash and ripple of the water around us, N. told me his story, which, being one of the most curious, in some points, that I ever heard, I will repeat, for the benefit of my readers, as nearly as possible in his own words, only asking the aforesaid readers not to set the curious facts I am about to relate down in their own minds at once as incredible, since, strange as they are, they are nevertheless true.

I think I must begin quite at the beginning, B. (said N. to me), for it must be at least five or six years since I saw you last, and the events I am going to tell you happened within the last two. You must know, then, that I was the happy possessor of an Irish uncle, who, though he had never seen me, yet, having orthodox ideas on the subject of relationship and its claims, when he found himself dying sent for his lawyer and volume of the *Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*. Luckily for me that venerable volume had given me a place, though but an insignificant one, in its pages; so, finding I was the nearest relative he had living, my uncle caused his will to be drawn out, bequeathing his estate to me on the conditions that I should spend a certain part of each year there so long as

it remained in my possession, and adding certain rigorous remarks upon the evils of absentee landlords. Having accomplished this task, my worthy kinsman set his house in order, took to his bed, and died peacefully, first writing a letter to me, to be forwarded by his lawyer after his decease, setting forth his reasons for the unexpected bounty he was bestowing upon me.

I was lounging in my club in London when this document reached me, with an explanatory and congratulatory note from the lawyer, and you may guess how surprised and delighted I was at such a piece of good fortune. I lost no time in hurrying over to Ireland and taking possession of my newly acquired estate, which I found to consist of a fine old house and some three thousand acres of excellent land, bringing in a very sufficient income, even at the low rate at which it was let to the tenants. The steward was an active intelligent man, who soon explained to me everything I required, and I had much pleasure in retaining him in his post. After all the affairs were settled to my satisfaction, I began to look about me to see how I and my neighbours were likely to agree—an important point, since I had to spend at least two months of each year in that part of the world.

Irish miles are much more expansive than English ones, as I daresay you know; so my first proceeding was to take an Ordnance map of the country and mark out a circuit of ten miles, with my house as the centre, such being about the limit of distance for a comfortable drive or ride. I felt rather sold, however, when I found that within this circle there were apparently only two houses of any importance to be found, so that between these two all my hopes

lay. The next question was who lived there, and to find out that point I summoned the steward and interrogated him.

That functionary's answers were plain and concise: No. 1 was occupied by a widow lady, family one daughter and one son, the whereabouts of the latter being unknown. No. 2 had for its master an old clergyman, doctor of divinity, unattached and unmarried; also, so far as I could ascertain, held rather in awe by the people about him, owing to certain scientific proclivities, which, to their uneducated understandings, smacked of the diabolical; a prejudice rather intensified than lessened by the fact of his being a minister of the Protestant Church. However, this gossip did not concern me, so I cut it short.

Evidently, then, my duty was to call upon the widow and make her acquaintance. As for the D.D., I thought if he was anxious to know me he might very well call himself; but meanwhile I was not particularly anxious to meet him, knowing from experience how uninteresting people with a hobby generally make themselves. Next morning, therefore, I had my horse (a beautiful bay thoroughbred belonging to my late uncle) saddled, and rode off on my voyage of discovery.

Rockfield (as was the name of Mrs. Cunningham's house) I found to be a very prettily situated little cottage, standing near the edge of an ornamental piece of water decorated here and there with quaint artificial islands covered with luxuriant flowers and foliage. The house itself was covered from basement to roof with one rich green mass of ivy, which barely allowed room for the openings of the windows. Altogether it was one of the most tasteful scenes I had ever looked on, and I augured

well for the culture of the designers as I rode up to the door, dismounted, and rang the bell.

A fresh-looking servant-maid answered my summons, and invited me to walk in. I did so, throwing the reins of my horse to a boy who appeared from the back of the house, and was ushered into a little drawing-room, whose furniture and pictures went far to realise my ideas of perfection in taste. There was an exquisite little gem of oil-painting over the mantelpiece, representing a view of Scratchell's Bay in the Isle of Wight, with which locality I was well acquainted. I was standing admiring this when the door opened, and Mrs. Cunningham and her daughter entered.

Mrs. Cunningham was a tall slender lady with a pale refined face, which must at one time have been very beautiful, but which I own was quite lost upon me just then in the sight of the girl that followed her. I won't try to describe her to you—you would only laugh at me if I were to go into raptures over her golden hair and her blue eyes, and all the rest; so I will only say that it was the most beautiful face I had ever seen or ever wish to see, and that from that moment I understood what I had often laughed at—the possibility of what the novelists call 'love at first sight.'

Don't imagine I am going to give you a *résumé* of love-scenes and suchlike here, or to attempt to interest you in a woman you have never seen. Thank God, Ethel Cunningham has promised to be my wife, and when we are married you shall come and stay with us for a while and judge for yourself. I have only mentioned her at all because she is a necessary part of my story.

As you may imagine under the circumstances, after that first meet-

ing I spent a good deal of my time at Rockfield, and very shortly declared my wishes with regard to her daughter to Mrs. Cunningham, who made no objections, since, indeed, she had learned to like me very rapidly, as I fancy any one will do when you commence by liking them yourself. She thought it right, however, to give me a history of the family, from which I learned that her only son had caused her a painful life of anxiety, and had at last closed a long career of extravagance and prodigality by enlisting in the second battalion of the 3d Buffs, then just proceeding to the Cape, as a means of escaping his creditors. I could only sympathise with her, and tell her I believed that the army was an excellent school for teaching any young man self-denial, and that I trusted he would return home changed for the better. At the same time I could not see that it had anything to do with my engagement to her daughter; so engaged we were accordingly, and after that the time passed, as you may imagine, very pleasantly and quickly for awhile. One day, as I was looking over some accounts in my study with my steward, I was startled to see Ethel riding up the avenue with every appearance of haste. I ran out to meet her; but she would not dismount, though evidently in a great state of nervous excitement. Gradually I gathered from her that she had heard that war had been declared at the Cape against the Zulus, and that her brother's was one of the regiments ordered to the front. Now to my certain knowledge the mails from the Cape had come in only three days before, and there was certainly no mention of war in them, though much of disturbances in the country; so I could only imagine that some flying rumour with no foundation of

truth had been going about, and that Ethel had given it too ready credence. To reassure her, therefore, I asked her where she had heard the news. The reply startled me, 'From Dr. Edwards.' Now 'Edwards' was the name of the Doctor of Divinity before mentioned; so, unless he had gone suddenly mad, I could conceive no reason why he should be spreading such reports. However, whether mad or not, I felt an access of righteous anger against him; and, seeing that Ethel was very near a fit of crying, I lifted her perforce from her horse, and gave her in charge to my worthy housekeeper, telling her I would ride over and see Dr. Edwards myself and find out all about it if she would wait there till my return; and with this object in view I was speedily in the saddle.

Dr. Edwards' house was a substantially built one, with no pretensions to beauty or elegance. I gave my card to the servant at the door, telling her I wished to see her master on urgent business, and was ushered into the study, a comfortable room filled with books, chiefly, as I could see at a glance, of a scientific and medical tendency. The doctor did not keep me long waiting. He was a short wizened-looking man, with an inveterate habit of taking snuff, but no other remarkable characteristic. After the usual civilities had been interchanged I opened the subject I had come on abruptly.

'Is it the case, Dr. Edwards, that you have told Miss Cunningham that war is declared at the Cape?'

The doctor nearly let his snuff-box fall.

'Dear, dear, these women are too bad!' said he. 'She solemnly promised me early this morning that she would tell that to no one; and here it is back already.'

I confess I felt a longing to horsewhip the doctor.

'How dare you, sir, tell so deliberate a falsehood to any one? The Cape mails came in last Friday, and there was not a word of war in them. You could not possibly have heard since.'

Dr. Edwards smiled a queer smile.

"Possible" is a very bad word to use in that sense, sir. Come, Mr. N., you have accused me of telling an untruth, so I owe it to myself to show you that I am no liar. Once for all, will you believe my word that I know war is declared?

I hope I may be excused under the circumstances when I answered,

'I really cannot.'

Dr. Edwards knit his brows.

'Seeing is believing, they say,' said he quietly; 'nevertheless there is a blessing upon those who believe without seeing. However, as my word of honour is not sufficient to persuade you, come with me, and I will show you proof.'

So saying, he unlocked a small door opening out of the library, and motioned to me to enter.

I found myself in a small room lit by one little window, which threw a feeble light. From wall to wall of the room a bench had been built somewhat similar to a carpenter's, and divided into twenty-six equal compartments. Each compartment was marked with a letter of the alphabet in large type, and was divided into a number of small subdivisions, each containing—a common garden snail!

My first impulse was to make a rush for the door, to escape from the madman who I had no doubt was before me; but Dr. Edwards, probably foreseeing such a move, had locked us in and

coolly pocketed the key. He stood now enjoying my astonishment with a satirical smile.

'It was your own choice to come, remember, Mr. N. However, I am not so mad as you think. You shall read a message from the Cape for yourself. Just take a piece of paper, and note down each letter as you see a snail corresponding to it move.'

Mechanically I took the paper and pencil he offered me, whilst the doctor took in his hand a minute galvanic battery about the size of a thimble, and touched with one of its wires a snail lying in a box apart from all the others. The animal contorted itself slightly.

'That is the signal to my correspondent that I am here,' said the operator. 'Now watch.'

I watched with all my attention, and presently saw one of the snails under the letter 'C' contract himself much as his predecessor had done; then followed an 'H,' and then several other letters, which I wrote down. A pause, and then it began again. I wrote vigorously. Suddenly the whole thing came to an end, and I looked down at the paper. It read thus:

'Chelmsford enters Zululand by Natal.'

'Well, are you satisfied now?' said the doctor.

'Satisfied?' answered I. 'Are you the fiend in person, or what does it all mean?'

It was an impolite question certainly, but seemed to amuse him greatly.

'Come now, Mr. N.,' said he, laughing, 'you doubted my word, and I have a fair right to be angry; but under the circumstances of the case I will forgive you. Let us have a glass of wine, and I will tell you all about it.'

I agreed, though in a great hurry to get back; and the doctor told me a most wonderful story, which sounded like a chapter of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, and which, but for ocular evidence, I should certainly have been very doubtful about. It appeared that he and a companion had discovered the wonderful fact that when two snails were kept in contact with one another for some time, a most extraordinary sympathy was developed between them, answering somewhat to the relation between a mesmeriser and his patient when in the mesmeric trance, and that, by a series of experiments, they had found that when one snail was excited by galvanism, the other showed sufficient traces of sympathetic excitement to be recognised. Distance being quite immaterial to the success of the experiment, and the doctor's friend having business at the Cape, he agreed to take with him a box of these sympathetic snails, and to try the effect in its practical bearings. This was the result, a most satisfactory one as regarded the experiment.

I asked Dr. Edwards why he had not published the important news he had received.

He laughed.

'My dear sir, how long do you suppose my secret would have remained one had I done so? You yourself are a living example of the results of telling it to one person under promise of silence. By the way, I hope you understand that what I have shown you must be, for obvious reasons, considered as a strictly confidential communication?'

I assented—indeed I could scarcely do otherwise; but secrecy not being one of my virtues, from that day began a series of annoyances for me. I was perpetually

on the point of letting out the startling news I had heard by pure inadvertence, and then, having to correct myself, leaving no doubt a very unpleasant impression upon my auditors. Moreover, Ethel would hear of nothing less than an excursion to the Cape in person, to buy her brother out before the actual fighting began. In vain I represented—first, that the authorities would not dispense with the services of a soldier whilst actually engaged in a campaign; and secondly, that even if they were willing to do so, no soldier worthy of the name would allow it to be done for him. At length I was obliged flatly to refuse to have anything to say to such a proceeding. This caused our first quarrel, a pretty serious one; though I had the satisfaction of knowing that it effectually prevented my bride-elect from—to put the fact in plain English—making a fool of herself.

Meanwhile months rolled on, and the war pursued its course. Dr. Edwards kept us well informed of events for a while, and saved us much anxiety during the time that Cunningham was shut up with his regiment in Fort Ekowe. But as spring wore on the messages suddenly ceased, and the next Cape mail brought a letter from the correspondent there announcing the tragic end of his snails at the hands of a new and unscientific Kaffir servant. This serio-comic end to the great experiment amused me mightily at first, till I found it was no laughing matter; for Ethel, who had hitherto been watching for news with breathless anxiety, now that it came only by months instead of days, became seriously ill from the strain upon her mind. At last in despair I volunteered to make a journey out to the Cape myself, see her brother, and bring him home if

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the war was over by that time; and last, but not least, carry out a new box of snails. So here I am in the Atlantic Ocean, with a steam-yacht hired for the year, and a cargo of crawling things below which would make a hen's mouth water to look at.

Such was the conclusion of N.'s story, and at this exceedingly lame finale I burst into a fit of laughter, which my friend looked somewhat offended at, seeing, I fancy, as well as myself the ridiculous side of the narrative, but unfortunately feeling that the point was rather against himself. However, by a few well-chosen questions I soon pacified him, and then proposed that we should take a look at the snails.

'Dr. Edwards agreed to be always on the look-out from twelve till one o'clock each day,' said N. 'Suppose we send him a message? It is just about noon now by Irish time, I think.'

I agreed; so we went down below to a room which had formerly been a cabin, but was now fitted up identically as N. had described that in the doctor's house to me. I looked at the motley assemblage of snails with interest. Each had his own little box with green food and water separate from the others. A stock of leaves had been provided by the simple process of sowing seed in a large iron tank filled with clay, and these leaves being steeped in weak sugar-and-water the creatures seemed to relish greatly.

N. proceeded to work. He took up his pigmy battery, and applied it to the snail meant to call attention to the message. The animal contorted itself most satisfactorily, but there was no answering result. After waiting awhile N. tried some of the others, but nothing followed.

'What on earth has gone wrong with them?' said he to me in despair at last. 'There cannot be any one looking out on the other side.'

'Perhaps the hens have eaten the doctor's snails,' I suggested consolingly. 'Try again to-morrow.'

But on the morrow it was just the same—no result again, and we looked rather blank.

'I'll tell you what,' said my friend at last, 'I am not going any farther on this wild-geese chase without being certain that all is right. I mean to go straight back to Southampton, and take train from there to Holyhead, and so to Ireland. I can drop you at your fort on the way.'

So it befell that just a week after I had left my castle I was landed there again, to the great surprise, not to say delight, of the unhappy mortal who had been condemned to take my place. The Horse Guards were graciously pleased to be satisfied with my 'reasons in writing'; and very soon I had settled down again, though not without a determination to hear the end of the strange story I had so curiously become acquainted with. A week later I received the following letter:

'My dear B.,—No wonder we could not get the snails to act. Poor Dr. Edwards is dead—shot down at his own avenue gate by some cowardly villain, and of course, in the confusion that followed, his experiments had a bad chance of being looked after. Miss Cunningham and I are to be married the day after to-morrow in Dublin, at the Shelborne Hotel. Get a couple of days' leave, and come and be my best man at the wedding. We are going to start together in a day or two after for the Cape, to bring her brother

home. Great hurry; no time for
more.—Yours ever, N.'

I went to the colonel at once on the receipt of the above missive, and with difficulty obtained three days' leave; ran over to Ireland and saw my friend married (his bride being, by the way, all and more than all he represented her in the way of beauty). Four days later I dipped the flag on the roof of my fort in salute to the steam-yacht whose side I knew so well, as she steamed gaily out to sea with an ebb-tide.

As to the greatsnail experiment, I have reason to believe that it

has since been abandoned by Dr. Edwards' friend, so I have no hesitation in mentioning it in print. Whether he found that flesh and blood were unable to contend against the many evils they were heir to, and to make head against gutta-percha-covered cables and galvanic batteries, or whether, the Kaffir having demolished his stock-in-trade, he was unable, in that remote region, to provide another, I cannot say. But should any of my readers desire to repeat the experiment, the way is open to them. Only let them beware of hens—it is my last caution!

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THE VIOLIN-PLAYER.

BY BERTHA THOMAS, AUTHOR OF 'PROUD MAISIE.'

CHAPTER VII.

A FANTASY.

'It was a lucky job, and a very lucky job too, that Mrs. Damian settled to take Bessy along with her. I've done my best, but I couldn't answer but that *she* might have got wind of this business. She's a little bloodhound, she is!'

Bessy was Mrs. Damian's maid, and Lacy's rival in the household, though by no means so great a personage as he. She was his inveterate enemy also, hating him quite straightforwardly, and always on the look-out to do him an injury.

So mused the factotum as he stood on the station platform with an immovable countenance, watched the train roll away with the womenkind of the establishment, and touched his hat mechanically as they disappeared, thinking to himself: 'Now for master and me!'

Gervase also, like the dutiful son that he was, had come to see the travellers off. When the train was out of sight he turned round to Lacy, who retouched his hat with a shade more spirit, saying, 'It is all right, sir; the boat is waiting, the luncheon packed and on board. By the time you get down to the landing you will find everything ready for starting.'

Gervase nodded, and set off at once for the rendezvous, reaching it in time to receive the first arrivals.

His German studies had brought him into relations with several

of the resident families—simple easy-going folk, with whom he was immensely popular. A very slight acquaintance usually sufficed to put him on a friendly footing with most people. Some invariable universally-sympathetic quality pervading his address made this human being welcome to every one. The father-professors and their student-sons admired him, and felt his friendship a certain social privilege. To their wives he was simply an ideal hero lost or strayed out of the pages of a novel, and they availed themselves of the privilege their discretion of years allowed them of making no secret of their opinion. Their daughters sighed and kept silence.

The guests, about a dozen in number, were quickly assembled. Linda was the last to arrive. Her floating pale-green dress, blonde curls, and China-rose complexion made a ravishing little colour-piece, as at length she was seen approaching in the distance with Laurence.

'That's right,' said Gervase, as they shook hands; 'so you have made your brother bring his violin, as I wished.'

He had even sent Lacy to offer to take it down to the boat. But that was a possession Laurence would never consent to entrust to strange hands.

And now the little toy steam-barge, gaily 'got up' for the occasion, streamers flying, waltzes playing (Gervase had engaged three local musicians to enliven

them on board), glided down the river, to the cheers of a group of urchins on the bank.

'Where are you going to take us to, Mr. Damian?' asked Linda, who stood by his side, watching the receding shore. 'I, for one, have no idea.'

'Won't you leave it to me?' he said. 'I like people best to have absolute confidence in me and ask no questions.'

She laughed and glanced up archly into his face. His look, though pleasant, was so penetrating, that it silenced the arch repartee on her lips.

'I am going to take you to what they call the Nixie's Stone. You know the spot, of course. There's an island, I'm told, and a haunted rock with legends hanging about it, and on shore hazel woods and banks of flowers; altogether a capital place to lunch in.'

'It was an adorable idea of yours,' said Linda gaily.

'It should be,' he said, speaking low and smiling, 'since it was yourself who inspired it.'

The next moment he was doing the conventional-polite to Frau Professorinn Erlanger, leaving Linda unusually flurried. What was the talisman that enabled him to disarm the coquette in her, laying her as defenceless as the veriest *ingénue* ever victimised?

All the party were on friendly and familiar terms. Talk and laughter flowed apace. Only one kept aloof—Laurence, stationed at the prow of the boat, with face averted and mind far away from the jolly crew, but happiest of all perhaps in the keenest possible enjoyment of this rare delightful outing. It was simply delicious to stand there, without having to talk, staring at the banks and trees and rushes as they swept by. A world of sweet and deli-

cate frolics and gleeful fancies danced and careered about in that young head, whilst the broad pleasantry echoed from the deck fell on those ears unheeded.

'There's Laurence at his reveries as usual,' remarked Erlanger to Linda. 'Are you not afraid of his falling into the river? He looks like a boy who might walk in his sleep.'

'O, Laurence is wide awake enough,' replied Linda. 'He has plenty of sense too, twice as much as myself,' and she laughed.

Now Gervase had eyes for everybody, and the strange, pale, quiet-looking boy was not the member of his party who had attracted the smallest share of his attention.

'You are very silent; I hope you are enjoying your holiday a little too,' he said presently, coming up close behind the slender figure at the prow.

Gervase's voice was in itself a heavenly gift, deep-toned, full, and without a flaw. It thrilled Laurence, pretty much as his look had thrilled Linda.

'You are so industrious, I hear,' he pursued. 'Your sister tells me you scarcely allow yourself a day's rest once in six months. You deserve to become a great player.'

'Some day,' said Laurence musingly.

'Will you play to me by and by? I should like to hear you.'

'I seldom do,' said Laurence, glancing round expressively at the jovial group behind them, 'except to my professor, and to Linda in the evenings.'

'Ah, of course I should never think of bothering you to play to all these people—the music I've got on board will do for them—nor even to me, if you would rather not; but perhaps some time, if the fancy takes you to give me a great deal of pleasure—'

Laurence smiled. After all she liked this Englishman. He did not tease, he was not patronising. Gervase knew the right shade of consideration to put into his manner, even to a boy.

Already the little barge was miles away from Bleiburg. At every turn the river scenery became finer and wilder; but again it was Laurence alone who had a glance or a thought to spare for the sweeping willow-beds, the startled reed-birds flying off at the boat's approach, the picturesque broken rocks belting the shore, and the gentle bends and lake-like reaches of the stream. Lacy, by command, had uncorked some bottles of Rhine wine, and the company sat in a circle, sipping out of spiral glasses, proposing comic toasts, and replying in burlesque speeches.

'If only Mrs. Damian could see master now!' thought Lacy the saturnine, as he watched Gervase in his glory, seated between his German professor's wife and Linda, king of his company, and thoroughly relishing his undisputed sway.

Towardstwoo'clock they landed at their destination. The inspection, from the bank, of the Nixie's haunt—a huge boulder of rock rising in the midst of the stream, and on which, when the moon cast certain shadows, the eye of faith could, it was said, discern the white figure of the water-sprite—took up the attention of the party for a few minutes. Meanwhile Lacy and the boatmen, in an open glade in the woods behind, were preparing what to the majority of the guests was the event of the day—the cold collation.

It was pronounced perfect. Lacy had surpassed himself, and forgotten nothing. Though to Gervase's ideas the provision made

was extremely unostentatious, to his homely, thrifty-minded friends, unaccustomed to English ways, it seemed delicate, luxurious, and recklessly extravagant.

Under such exhilarating influences the spirits of the company rose and rose till the hilarity became a trifle uproarious. Laurence had been amused at first, though remaining perforce a silent spectator, with no little squibs to contribute to the fireworks of the entertainment; but in due time began to tire of the scene. The luncheon seemed interminable. At last a childlike impatience of sitting still bore down the remnants of politeness, and the youngest member was missed from the circle. Only by Gervase, that is; the rest were too busy with their knives and forks.

Laurence strolled down to the shore, where a little rowing-boat belonging to the steam-barge was moored. Here the violin had been left when they went to luncheon. The child stepped in, and sat there at ease, throwing crumbs to the water-birds that peeped out of the rushes, pulling at the aquatic plants, and sousing both hands in the water.

An hour may have slipped by thus, but still the jingling of glasses, clatter of plates, and convivial laughter behind the trees did not cease. Suddenly the truant was startled by a voice close overhead.

'Hullo! why, what on earth are you doing there?'

It was Mr. Damian, looking down from the bank above.

'Dabbling,' said Laurence, looking up at him.

'By Jove,' he laughed, 'I don't care if I come and dabble too.'

He made a long step into the boat, unfastened it, and pushed off into the middle of the stream. Then he seated himself in the

bows with a sigh of unutterable relief.

'Is luncheon over at last?' asked Laurence.

'You may well ask! Mine was, an hour ago; but Professor Katzekopf and some others are at it yet, and will never desist, I feel sure, till every dish is cleared. I'm sorry to say there's a good deal left still. But I'm beaten, I confess it, and positively must go off duty for a little while.'

He was rowing up the stream; a very few strokes brought the light little craft far onward. They shot along for some while in silence, no sound near them now but the rippling of the water on the sides of the boat. Gervase, whom the prolonged monotony of the luncheon had wearied even more than Laurence, was exulting in this unhopèd-for escape from the tedious festivity. There was something audacious, something perhaps not altogether courteous, in thus coolly absconding from his guests and leaving them to entertain each other; but he said to himself he could not help it; his company would forgive him. Possibly he cared too little for them, socially speaking, to weigh their displeasure against his desire.

'Where are they?' asked Laurence presently. 'They cannot *all* be lunching still. It must be four or five o'clock. Look at the sun.'

'Well, those who are not still at table, or table-cloth rather, are wandering about the woods in twos and threes, picking bilberries or wild strawberries or something. Each party will suppose I am with the other, so my escapade won't be discovered at once,' said Gervase, speaking to himself, contentedly. 'I mean to profit by it to enjoy a little fantasy of my own. You have

your violin there, I see, my boy, and you are going to play me something now on the spot.'

They were far ahead up the stream, out of earshot of the picnickers. Gervase, now turning the head of the boat, allowed it to drift back slowly, steadying it with a careless occasional dip of his oar.

'There now,' he said, reclining negligently in the bows, 'do begin. What a strange little fellow it is!' he added mentally; 'he's a new type to me. I must study him.'

Laurence looked up, piqued. Who was this young Englishman that he should give himself the imperial airs of a rajah? Gervase, who was one to telegraph to heaven for St. Cecilia to come down to sing him to sleep, if the idea seized him, was thinking how delightful it would be to have a violin-boy—a pretty boy like this, with bright hazel eyes and wavy hair—in his service, to play to him, and soothe him with music, when tired or fretted or bored—a sort of David and harp on the premises. If Laurence would only begin, he might fancy himself for the moment that Italian prince of the Middle Ages he would not have objected to having been born.

'Don't you hear?' he resumed, half-entreating, half-commanding. 'Now, do be a nice boy, and play.'

Laurence did not comply, though feeling rather less angry than might have been expected.

'I can't always play,' was the quick reply, 'as I might bring a chair or shut the door, because I'm told. I'm not a musical-box. Did you think I was?'

'I've offended him now,' thought Gervase; 'the boy's sensitive. I ought to have thought of that.'

'Of course,' he said, modulating

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into a tone of gentle persuasion, 'I quite see how you cannot play in all places and to all people with pleasure; but I should have thought that everything was in your favour here—the boat scarcely moves, not enough to put you out; then as to your audience, I'm not a performer certainly, nor a judge, but music is a passion with me for all that. However, play to the river and woods, the sky and the sunset that's coming on, and never mind me'—throwing himself back in the boat—'only play.'

Laurence was not proof against his sincere entreaties, raised the violin, and began—obeying his injunctions to the letter; indeed, soon becoming forgetful even of his presence. At such moments the little musician was almost non-existent for the outside world. Laurence had early acquired the power of thus throwing all the nerve-force in her—so to speak—into one channel as she played. The boat they were in might have been swamped, a hailstorm have burst, a flood uprisen, Laurence would have been the last to find it out.

'The little fellow's a real genius,' thought Gervase, struck beyond all anticipation as he listened. He was the merest amateur in music; but genius is like the sun, its rays penetrate wise and ignorant alike. He was now contemplating the violin-player with an intentness of interest, which Laurence fortunately was too abstracted to perceive.

'That was a treat, indeed,' he observed, when the last notes had died away. 'Who taught you before you came to Professor Nielsen?'

'Allori, of Milan.'

'Then you were at the music-school in those parts with your sister?'

'No; but I had lessons,' Laurence replied, in a low voice, feeling uneasy and confused. Never having yet had to run the gauntlet of cross-examination as to the past, the child was entirely unaware of the difficulty, the impossibility to certain natures of prevaricating, or of parrying questions. Gervase saw, with half a glance, that he could elicit any information that he wanted, and for many reasons his present companion had vividly roused his curiosity.

'What was your father's name?' he inquired.

Laurence coloured painfully.

'O, why do you ask me?' she exclaimed, with agitation.

Gervase, quite unsuspectingly, had hit on the question of all others most calculated to put her off her guard. Her father's memory had been so inexpressibly dear to her, that the mere mention of his name in conversation with a stranger seemed a desecration.

'Because you are not in the least like your sister,' he said: 'you speak English with quite another accent, besides; and I thought she might only be your half-sister, perhaps.'

Again Laurence coloured, deeply perplexed, suddenly realising that if the mystification had been successfully sustained so far, it was only because no difficulties had presented themselves.

'Is she your sister?' asked Gervase, leaning forward and bending on the child's face a look of incisive scrutiny.

Laurence met it bravely, ready to defy, ready to be dumb. No one should force from her lips a secret they had a right to keep. But his expression unarmed her—it was so kind, so protective, and earnest, altogether so inviting of trust, that she replied frankly—after all there seemed no call for equivocating on this minor point—

'She is not my sister really. We call ourselves brother and sister, and people here suppose that we are. But we never even met till we left Italy at the same moment to travel here together, two years ago.'

Gervase was staring at the speaker in dumb amazement.

'You won't tell anybody,' Laurence continued earnestly; 'it is just as if we were related, you know. I'm sure if Linda were my sister I couldn't be fonder of her than I am: I can't bear to think we may have to leave each other when she goes from Bleiburg.'

Gervase's perplexity had reached its climax—Laurence looked at him wonderingly—he began a random sentence, broke off again, checked himself, suddenly struck by a new light. An idea that had been haunting him vaguely the last half hour had all at once sprung into shape. Was it possible? He *must* solve the mystery somehow, and Gervase had not moved in certain diplomatic circles for nothing.

'Then you are not Italian,' he resumed quietly, 'nor American. You are, of course, as I always thought, French.'

'Yes, from Dauphiné.'

'Ah; and Laurence, I've heard, is a girl's name in France,' he said very gently, but significantly, keeping his eyes fixed on her as he spoke.

Laurence sprang up, routed.

'Don't upset the boat, please,' he continued indolently, amused at the startled defiant expression that had rushed into her face. The conqueror, gazing at the light figure and delicate features before him, was thinking what a fool he was not to have found out the truth for himself, but to have waited for Laurence to put him on the track by her own thoughtless

admissions. 'Why do you look so frightened and angry?' he said, eager now to soothe and reassure her; 'I've known it from the very first—I guessed it at once, and never breathed a word to any one, nor ever will, not even to your sister.' Truth was not absolutely the same thing to him as to his little companion.

Laurence had reseated herself; but her hand on her violin trembled a little as she said, in a low voice,

'I came here on purpose to learn from Professor Nielsen, then I was told he never took girl-pupils, and so—'

'Well done!' put in Gervase approvingly; 'and he doesn't suspect?'

'Not he—nor any one; but they must all know soon,' said Laurence, with a heavy sigh at the thought of the day of reckoning awaiting her—'not yet.'

'You may rely on it that no one shall be the wiser any sooner for me,' he said firmly. 'There, Laurence, take my hand and word for it that I'll keep your secret as religiously as if I were the confessional-box.'

'And did you really find it out before, and never tell?' she exclaimed, impressed by such marvellous keenness and discretion.

He smiled reassuringly. The novel adventure had proved vastly more interesting than he had expected. They were now nearly in sight of the Nixie's Rock.

'Play to me once more, Laurence, just once, before we join those friends of ours. Never mind them—never mind anything in the world that is outside this boat.'

Laurence complied, this time nothing loth, and followed with the Romance she had played to Val Romer one memorable afternoon. It had remained her fa-

vourite, for all the simplicity of its melody, modulations, and effects; it had the charm of some old simple story of which one never tires, because it ever calls up the pleasurable impression of the first hearing, when all the changes and incidents and shapes that figure in it were new.

For Laurence it seemed destined to have distinct associations; and first and foremost, this present summer evening, it recalled that other long past in a distant land, among the woods on the Monte Motterone.

Gervase noted her expression; he waited till the close, then asked,

'Tell me, child; where was your mind wandering to?'

Laurence laughed.

'It is the music—I think it is two years since I played it last—and it brought back the day just before I left Italy, when I was saying good-bye to Val. How far off it all seems!'

'Who was Val?' asked Gervase curiously.

'He was English,' said Laurence, 'and the kindest friend I ever had. O, he was so good to me!' eagerly rushing into praise of that old playmate, as though to make up for the inevitable break that had come about between them. What was he doing now? How entirely he had dropped out of her life, almost of her mind!

But it was not Gervase's way to allow the thoughts of any companion of his to be occupied with another than himself. Laurence's must not fly off thus to absent friends. He tried the charm of his conversation on her now, to draw her out—devoutly wishing he could have prolonged this interlude as indefinitely as his German friends had prolonged their luncheon; but that was out of the question. His absence had been

discovered by them at last, as the straggling parties met. They now stood in a group, conjecturing. Nobody missed Laurence or troubled on that score. But what of Mr. Damian? Had he fallen into the river? Was it a little farce to mystify them? Was he preparing a surprise?

Suddenly Erlanger, who was looking up the stream, exclaimed,

'At last! There he is. Why, Miss Linda, Miss Linda, if he hasn't been making your brother play to him in the boat!'

The skiff had just turned the corner, and came drifting smoothly down the stream: Gervase reclining at one end, an ideal of youthful strength, with a face that was subtle beneath its apparent immobility; and Laurence opposite him, bending forwards and leaning on her violin like some graceful page in a forgotten romance.

'A picture, a picture!' cried Erlanger, clapping his hands.

The whole party applauded, excepting Linda, who was frowning a little; and Gervase lifted his cap to the group as they approached.

'Let me tell you, Damian, you're a privileged person,' said Erlanger, as the skiff touched the shore. 'That miser Nielsen keeps his prodigy out of sight. I've never heard him play a note.'

'I have the advantage of you,' said Gervase calmly, and standing up in the boat. 'I have not had enough music yet. *Mdlle. Visconti*,' in an appealing tone, 'come here; I want you; he had noticed the cloud on her brow.'

She hesitated, then came a step nearer, and stood on the stone to which the boat was moored.

'Sing something,' he said. 'Laurence shall accompany you if he likes.'

The Mermaid's song from *Oberon* rose to her lips, a happy

inspiration. It fell on their ears like a musical emanation from the surrounding scene:

'O, 'tis pleasant to float on the sea,
When the wearied waves in a deep sleep
be,
And the last faint light of the sun hath
fled,
And the stars are mustering overhead;
The night breeze comes with breath so
bland,
Laden with sweets from a distant land!
O, 'tis pleasant to float and sing,
Whilst ever our dripping locks we wring.'

The return journey was delicious, 'moon, eclipse, nightingales, and all' said Lacy to himself, pleased with Nature for showing due respect for his master's *fête*.

Gervase scarcely left Linda's side for a moment; and she felt persuaded that, after all, it was purely from his interest in her and her concerns that he had gone out of his way to show so much attention to her supposed brother.

The whole crew were a little infected with sentimentality, and Heaven knows what was spoken, or whispered, or implied—what waifs and strays of romance were let loose to flit about, winged creatures of twilight, that vanish in a moment at the dawning of broad practical day.

On landing Gervase had to submit to an elaborated phrase, from each guest in turn, of thanks and compliments for what they called an 'ideal' entertainment.

His adieux over, he turned to Lacy:

'Have you paid those fellows?'

'Everything is paid for, sir.'

'Now recollect, all that remains for you to do is to hold your tongue.'

'That's easy, sir.'

'I'm glad you find it so;' and Gervase, elated at the success of his day's play, walked home leisurely, whistling the Mermaid's song. That and the violin ro-

mance were struggling for the preëminence in his brain.

Linda was so self-engrossed that evening when they reached home, that she was going off to bed in a reverie without wishing Laurence good-night, when the child's hand on her arm arrested her.

'Linda, I've something to tell you—something you'll hardly believe. I can't tell you how surprised I was. Mr. Damian has found out all about us.'

'What do you mean?'

'Found out first that you are not my sister; then the rest—*everything*.'

'Did you tell him?' cried Linda, in a voice half-choked with passion, and turning to Laurence a face metamorphosed with sudden anger.

'He guessed it,' said Laurence; 'asked me if it was not so. And he knew it all along, he says, and has promised not to tell.'

'Are you speaking the truth?' said the girl strangely, seizing her hand, and turning the light full on the child's frank bewildered countenance.

'Are you mad, Linda?' said Laurence. 'It was not my fault.'

Linda relaxed her hold.

'You're a little simpleton to go blabbing,' she said. 'You ought to have stuck to it through thick and thin. It was my fault ever to start such a piece of tomfoolery between us. I suppose now I must keep it up to the end. Happily that's not far off. Now tell me what Mr. Damian said, every word.'

Laurence's faithful matter-of-fact report of the conversation in the boat restored Linda's equanimity. Already she was half-ashamed of her senseless flash of jealousy. It was not the first of such outbreaks the child had seen. Linda laughed now, coaxed

and petted her; she wanted her to forget.

Laurence had never heard of lycanthropy; but when Linda was in one of her rages she felt just as if she were alone in the room with a wild animal.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELLE ET LUI.

A FORTNIGHT had gone by; the little water-fête was forgotten, and Gervase was congratulating himself that the dangers of discovery by his own people were overpast. There had been a poem upon it in the *Bleiburg Gazette*; the sheet had lain on Mrs. Damian's table for a week, but unopened. Moreover, the local Laura Matilda had proved so unequal to mastering an English patronymic, that it was doubtful if Mrs. Damian herself would have recognised the name she was so proud of, as travestied in the journal. But she had somehow divined that a little breeze of secret excitement was stirring.

For the last month Gervase had ceased to complain of dull Bleiburg, or hint at departure. He had set to studying German with double zeal; and was submitting with most edifying filial resignation to what again and again he had stigmatised as 'burial alive.'

'There's some new attraction,' thought Mrs. Damian anxiously. 'I must find out what it is.'

But Gervase had no confidant. His was one of those exceptional natures that need none. Most rigidly had he kept his own counsel as to what was going on in his mind.

That girl Linda was a little beauty. In a London crowd of

ornamental people she might, perhaps, have been overlooked; but when you come across a rare flower in frost-time, standing right in your path, you find a sort of luxury in undivided admiration.

But as a balance to the excessive homage of heart that the merely pretty face of an inferior creature could elicit from him, Gervase's supremacy struggled to assert itself somehow. He must subdue his idol. And the satisfaction he could derive from the successful exercise of his peculiar influence over the soft hearts and minds of maidens fair was, to his idea, emphatically the first of pleasures. No conceivable form of earthly enjoyment tempted him like the moral luxury of absolute moral domination. He must care for his game, too. To feign love for a pretty girl, to whom his heart remained virtually indifferent, he would have put down as inconceivably repulsive.

He liked of all things to *feel*, himself—to be allured, interested, fascinated—remaining meanwhile his own master. He must make his passions serve him. There was one that he served more than he knew—this passion for unbounded influence over the souls of the women he loved.

Linda the blonde, in her pale-green dress, and straw hat with water-lilies, singing the Mermaid's song on the rocks by the river, was as sweet an image as had ever haunted him. Then there were touches in her nature that piqued him, and placed her apart from the rank and file of fair-haired blue-eyed darlings—notably her intractable spirit, with its dash of Italian ferocity. She was a butterfly to look at, but a butterfly that might sting, a kitten with tiger possibilities. How jealous she could be! Gervase liked women to be jealous. He

went so far as to feel a frank sympathy with Queens Fredegonde and Roxana in their merciless behaviour to their supplanners. Altogether if she was queen of his fancy for the time being, he had established her right to the distinction.

Linda's own sentiments were subject to no such definite laws of motion and proportion. They were a chaos, an untried sea. When had she set her life's course by any compass, or ceased to shift the rudder as the wind and tide of inclination should set? Yet with Linda, this most facile of girls, Gervase, this most winning of men, was not to walk over the course, as she soon let him know. Again and again, after that day on the river, he found her avoiding him, and if ever they met, unmistakably fighting shy of his attentions.

Her shrinking from him half puzzled herself. Linda's views of life, it is needless to say, were not those of a nun. Principles of self-respect were as sounding brass in her ears. Virtue in her unwritten code of morality meant generosity, good-nature, toleration; and for the rest, the better part of virtue was discretion. She did not want for admirers, and in the superficialities of flirtation she was at eighteen as well versed as Gervase himself. But up to now no deeper feeling than the pleasure of vanity gratified, the smart of vanity disappointed, had been involved in any of her schoolgirl romances. But already Gervase had roused in her the germ of a deeper feeling, strong enough, it may be, to sweep away prudence, self-interest, regard for her main chance in the future, like so many straws. Already it made her preoccupied against her will, pensive, half-melancholy sometimes.

It was in one of these new

moods, absently musing because she could not help it of the *beau cavalier sans merri* that in crossing her path seemed to have left a shadow there, that Laurence found her one afternoon alone in the music-room.

The young violinist had entered quickly, cap off, hair tumbled, the little quasi-boyish face troubled and very grave.

'Linda,' she exclaimed, setting down her instrument-case, rather brusquely, 'he is going away.'

'Going away!' uttered Linda blankly, looking up colourless.

'Leaving Bleiburg for good; he has just told me,' continued the child hurriedly. 'It is sudden; he waits only till the Academy concert is over, and then goes.'

Gervase Damian going! Well, that the news should take away her breath, make her heart swell and her head swim, was, on the face of things, ridiculous. But the world was very wide. Should they ever meet again?

'What I shall do,' continued Laurence despondingly, 'I cannot think.'

'You?' cried Linda, bewildered.

'Yes, without him, when he is gone.'

Linda rubbed her eyes. She or the child must be mad.

'That's not all,' resumed Laurence; 'he wishes me to enter the Academy at once when he leaves, and—'

'He—he? Of whom are you speaking?'

'Professor Nielsen, of course.'

Linda's countenance changed oddly, and she confounded Laurence by a burst of hysterical tears and laughter.

The child was alarmed. Linda, recovering, tried as well as she could to explain away the revolution of feeling that had made her cry. It left her *triste* and uneasy,

but had roused her from her previous inaction.

'Come,' she said, 'I want you to go to market with me. I promised Frau Schmidt that I would. It is late; but trust me to pick out the best of what's left.'

They started together accordingly, Laurence, in her fraternal capacity, carrying the basket.

'So old Neptune is actually going,' said Linda cheerfully. 'Why, Laurence, what a chance for you! You will now be saved the explanation with him you dreaded so much. Wait till the old savage is some hundred miles off, and then doff your disguise, if you please. The laugh will go against the Professor, and everybody will be delighted, hating him as they all do.'

'Linda, Linda,' Laurence objected, 'I sha'n't let him go away without telling him everything.'

'Then you'll be downright mad,' said Linda practically. 'Such a temper as he has! He mayn't smash your violin over your head, perhaps, when he knows you're a girl; but he may ruin your prospects here and elsewhere. He's very powerful, and he'll be furious with you, my child.'

'I know that.'

'O, you'll think better of it,' said Linda lightly. She was used to carry the day, with Laurence, in all indifferent matters. But when an important decision was at stake, and the two were in opposition, there was a tide that set in the younger girl against which Linda's arguments were mere straws.

A right pretty pair they made, as they went in and out among the market-women, Linda doing the parleying, Laurence the portering. They had become favourites with those German 'dames de la Halle,' who would pick out the

best of their fruit and vegetables for these nice-looking customers. Linda loved to linger, protracting the choosing process as long as possible, for the sake of a bit of talk.

This was not the first time that Gervase, who had discovered that there was a good chance of meeting her here at this hour, had happened to be returning from a walk by way of the market-place.

Perfectly well did Linda to-day see him approaching, and carefully she feigned to be blind till she heard his voice close by her side.

'Mdlle. Visconti, are you really so deeply engrossed with those radishes that you can't even look at me?'

Linda glanced up prettily.

'Of course I must attend to what's offered me to buy.'

'Then I wish you for a moment to look upon me as a cucumber or a melon. You might attend to me a little,' plaintively.

A pretty girl marketing looks very pretty indeed, especially if what she buys is picturesque and has idyllic associations. Eggs may pass, and fruit and tomatoes, and watercreas. Linda turning over the peaches and figs had never been more bewitching in her life.

'Are you coming to our concert,' she asked, 'to hear me sing? Three kreutzers change, please,' to the fruit-seller.

'Of course I am. How can you ask? But what concert? Tell me some particulars, please, for I never heard of it till this morning.'

'Ask Erlanger. He will give you a programme and so on. I have no memory. It is fixed for this day three weeks, at the Academy, and I am to sing the Jewel song from *Faust*. That's all I know. More radishes, please; these are overgrown. I'm leaving Bleiburg, you know, Mr. Damian.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes,' sighing. 'My good woman, those potatoes are past their first youth; and as to the turnip, I think a beetle has taken a fancy to it before me. Yes, Mr. Damian, I am off in the wide world again. My brother in Rome thinks he has paid enough for me already. I must shift for myself now.'

'And what do you propose to do?'

'Onions! No, thank you. What's the German for carrots, Mr. Damian? What do I propose to do, did you ask?' and she looked up into his face, singing softly,

'Chantez, chantez, ma belle,
Chantez toujours.'

Metaphorically speaking, Gervase was at her feet for that moment. One is really indebted to these creatures for being so charming.

But at this very instant he caught sight of Amy, attended by her maid Bessy, crossing the market-place, returning from their walk. Gervase's attention was immediately diverted to a quantity of curious crockery exposed for sale close by, just the sort of thing that his mother raved about; he remained deep in his blue-gray jugs till the two figures were well out of sight, and felt uncertain if he had been noticed or not. Meantime, Linda had concluded her last bargain. 'Good-bye,' she said to Gervase; 'I am going home.'

'Am I never to meet you except in the market-place?' he asked, in an injured tone.

'I don't know,' said Linda, with a wayward, provoking look Gervase found very irresistible. 'You see I am not yet a great artist, with time to myself, and a *hôtel* where I can receive my friends when I like. I am only a poor student, or I would ask you to come some day, when Laurence and I are at home.'

'To tea, for instance,' put in Gervase playfully; 'artist or student, there's no obstacle to that. Will you ask me, or won't you? If you do, I warn you I shall come. I want—well, suppose I want to hear your brother Laurence play once more.'

'My brother!' Linda looked up at him doubtfully, but his face gave no sign that he knew their secret. Gervase could be loyal in such matters. Linda might never have heard of the confession he had elicited, and he had promised Laurence to be dumb. Now if Gervase, from motives of loyalty or other motives, wished to keep a thing to himself, it would be as easy to raise the dead as to make him speak.

'*Apropos*, what has become of the boy?' continued Gervase, glancing round, for Laurence had disappeared the last ten minutes. 'Why, there he is; look at the little monkey, staring at the advertisements yonder!'

So taken up was Laurence with the placard she was reading, that it was only when Linda had come closer that her attention could be diverted. She scarcely seemed to see Mr. Damian, but burst out in a tone of delight, pointing to the poster,

'See, Linda, see! Can he actually be coming here?'

The bill contained a brief announcement of the expected arrival in Bleiburg of the celebrated violinist Araciél, a kind of comet among the star players of the period. Linda, as she read, became deeply interested also. Araciél was one of those successful artists whose fame extends from St. Petersburg to San Francisco. In any city his appearance would be a notable event; in Bleiburg it was a phenomenon.

'Well, if you are going to talk about Araciél,' said Gervase pre-

sently, piqued, for the new interest had monopolised Linda's attention, 'I shall wish you good-evening.'

'But you will come on Saturday,' said Linda promptly, turning to him, 'to tea with us *à l'Anglaise*. I shall ask Erlanger to meet you. He is a delightful professor to have. He is so sociable.'

Mr. Damian smiled the smile of defeat that is better than victory, and left her, more indisputably enamoured than ever.

'Gervase has something on his mind,' thought Mrs. Damian that evening; 'I never saw him so *distracted* at dinner before.'

'Gervase,' exclaimed Amy suddenly, during dessert, 'surely it was Mdlle. Visconti, Erlanger's pupil, that I saw you talking to in the market-place this afternoon. How did you ever get to know her? Mamma dear, she's perfectly lovely.'

'What?' interposed Mrs. Damian blandly, in a tone of surprise. 'Has Gervase actually succeeded in unearthing the little singer Erlanger is so wild about? Tell us all about her, Gervase. Amy and I are dying to know.'

'Ten to one you know more than I do,' returned Gervase resignedly. 'They say that she's thought a good deal of at the Academy here, and her little brother, who plays the violin, is something more wonderful still; he's to be the Paganini of the period,' he added, with an odd smile that puzzled his mother.

'Why did you never tell us you knew her?' continued Amy; 'how did you make her acquaintance?'

'Why, she's Erlanger's pupil, you goose,' put in Mrs. Damian; 'he and Gervase are great friends. Ofcourse he introduced them;' and Gervase assented silently.

'I am dying to hear her sing,' said Amy obstinately.

'Well, that's easy enough,' Gervase observed. 'The students have a concert at the Academy in a week or two. No doubt Erlanger can get you tickets; and I should think Mdlle. Visconti, as his crack pupil, will be sure to perform.'

There the conversation dropped, but Mrs. Damian had found the clue she wanted.

The approaching Academy concert was now the event of life to the students, who were working up for it zealously. Linda looked forward complacently to achieving there a final triumph ere leaving Bleiburg to enter on her profession. She was fond of holding forth at length, selfish length, to Laurence on the brilliancy of her prospects, thus forcing on the child a sad sense of the contrast afforded by her own. A few weeks more, and, Linda gone, she would be thrown on herself for the third time in her life, and without the infantine *insouciance* that had spared her the worst fears before. The coming crash made her giddy to think of. She would be disowned by the Professor, probably excluded from the Academy. Nielsen's malevolence to those who had offended him was notorious. The battle of life was to begin again for Laurence, and, looking back on the last two years, she clung yearningly to that happy time of hopeful work and day-dreams, of careless student life, with her pretty, good-humoured, and beloved adopted sister Linda.

It was tea-time. Erlanger dropped in punctually, a model guest who always knew how to make himself welcome. 'I bring,' he began, 'guess what I bring,—the latest news of Araciél.'

He was the bearer of a letter received that morning from the great man, and, being the single

Bleiburger who could boast of his personal acquaintance, naturally availed himself of his privilege to do so.

Linda assailed him with a storm of questions. Erlanger was equal to the occasion, and followed with a gossiping narrative. Subjects—Araciél's name, Spanish origin, history, private and professional, interspersed with wonderful anecdotes that would have taxed the credulity of less inexperienced listeners than Linda and Laurence.

The most interesting piece of information he reserved for the last. Araciél had accepted an invitation to be present at the coming Academy concert, and Erlanger laughingly exhorted Linda to be sure and sustain the honour of the institution.

'This is news,' said Linda gaily. 'Tell me, doesn't he require a promising soprano for his concert tour? I would go, for it would be such a good introduction. But he won't engage me; he'll want a star of the first magnitude.'

'I don't know,' said Erlanger shrewdly. 'Big stars like Araciél like to have little satellites.'

'Who has he got with him?'

'O, his wife in the first place.'

'What is she?'

'A good woman, English, with a contralto voice, who sits at Araciél's feet and mends his stockings. He is organising a concert tour. More I can't tell you; we shall know when he comes.'

But he had a number of good stories to tell about Araciél's domestic arrangements, and was in the midst of one when Mr. Damian joined the party at last.

'I am late,' he said as he came in, and Linda rose to welcome him. Erlanger's light paled on the instant; even Araciél became a thing of no moment. But Gervase, with the social tact and good breeding that stuck to him like

his skin, addressed his conversation largely to the glib professor, making the talk general during tea-time.

Then Linda rose and went to open the window. Gervase hastened to help her; they stepped out on the balcony, and seemed in no hurry to reënter the room. Erlanger, deserted by his grown-up listeners, continued to hold forth on his favourite subject to Laurence, whose attention never flagged.

'The programme of our concert is just out,' he said. 'That young Jonas, Nielsen's ex-pupil, is to show off. As a compliment to our visitor, they've put him down to play a concert-piece of Araciél's. The boy's mechanism is wonderful, but I can't bear the fellow because of his insufferable airs. It's a thousand pities you don't belong. Professor Nielsen makes no secret of it that he thinks twenty times higher of you than of him.'

Laurence sighed.

'This *Concert-stücke* is a clever composition,' continued Erlanger. 'Araciél sent me a copy. Would you like to see?' and he drew it from his pocket. 'I wonder what Jonas will make of it.'

'I wish it was me to play,' said Laurence ungrammatically.

'So do I,' said Erlanger. 'Next year, perhaps, your turn will come. But here's the music. If you like, I'll give you an idea of the thing.'

He seated himself at the piano, and began playing the opening phrase of the slow movement. Laurence, standing up behind him, joined in with the solo violin part, eliciting repeated *bravi* from Erlanger, who must talk even when playing. Their music made an appropriate accompaniment to another duet going on on the balcony.

'It was from here,' Gervase was saying, 'that I saw you first.'

'Yes, and we took you for a house-breaker,' laughed Linda; 'you startled poor Laurence out of his little wits. How did you manage the escalade?'

'Very easily. I'm not a German, always apprehensive of breaking my neck. You can see our balcony from here. I had often heard you singing in the distance; and that evening I said to myself that a glimpse of the singer I must have. So I made my voyage of discovery, and got my reward.'

Here Linda sighed opportunely.

'Am I never to see you except in a crowd?' he resumed pathetically. 'Is Erlanger, or your brother, to be always on guard to listen to what we are saying?'

His hand just touched hers as he spoke; his voice thrilled her by its gentle earnestness.

'How can I help it?' said Linda sadly; 'you know my lonely position—that I have my future to make for myself.'

'The future, the future!' said Gervase impatiently. 'Must we always put that first? Just now it seems you can think of it; but I cannot.'

'I must,' said Linda wistfully, 'though it would be easier to forget.'

'Forget,' he said playfully, 'and think only of now and of me.'

Linda looked up; her reply, whatever it was, had died on her lips. There was a minute's silence; the music from within filled the blank for both. Laurence, deep in her task, had just reached a passage of peculiar charm, and the sweet notes struck on Gervase's ear like a message from another world, half alluring, half tormenting by its mystery. His gaze grew vague; he relaxed his pressure of Linda's hand, and quite unconsciously remarked aloud,

'That boy plays divinely?'

Linda, nettled, strove forthwith to cut short their *tête-à-tête*. She stepped back into the music-room, joined the others; and it was all that Gervase could do, by superhuman exertions, to remove the unfavourable impression caused by his unlucky unaccountable absence of mind. However, Linda relented at last, and delighted her guests with a performance of the song she was to sing at the concert. She then dismissed them both, Gervase very much in love, and letting his imagination run on strange plans for the immediate future.

He reached home barely in time to dress for dinner. He was too preoccupied to notice Lacy's portentously solemn face till the latter began, in ominous tones,

'I've got to tell you, sir, that Mrs. Damian has found out all about the picnic.'

'The devil she has!' exclaimed Gervase, forgetting himself—he did occasionally. 'What damned fool has been blabbing now?'

'I don't know yet, sir, what put her on the track; but Bessy, at tea to-night, tackled me about it, chaffed me horrible. Of course I turned a deaf ear, sir, and a dumb tongue; but there's no doubt now that she knows all—down to where we had the lunch from!'

CHAPTER IX.

REVELATIONS.

MRS. DAMIAN had blinded herself as long as she could to the fact that her boy was grown up, that the time for him to depend on her, or allow her to dictate to him in important matters, was past. It is so easy for such a detaching process to go on for long gradually, unowned, till some day the weaker

one—grown the stronger—by some natural step, quietly taken, forces on the ex-protector a sense of the change. It strikes then like a sudden loss, is felt like a tear in the tenderest membrane, hardest of all hurts to bear with philosophy.

But Mrs. Damian, though suffering keenly from every fresh proof that her son was eluding her watch and ward, suffered like a Red Indian, in silence. She knew how, by showing temper, she would forfeit what remnant of influence she might yet preserve. She reasoned with herself, saying that a young man must have his fling, and that it was only her fondness which raised in her occasional mortal fears lest Gervase's 'fling' should clash with her plans in life for him. Of course he liked to be first in everything; must dress, dance, table-talk better than anybody else. Thus when it came to love, or play, the chances were that several women would, in their several ways, make fools of themselves for him. Alas, all her wisdom made the patient endurance of the withdrawal of his confidence no easier. Less and less of a moving power will she become in Gervase's life. He rises, she sinks; already, perhaps, he laughs at his former submissiveness, his respect and care for her motherly wisdom. Till a lingering regard for *auld lang syne*—nothing more on his side—will be the only link left between her, grown weak and old, the woman on the wane, and her day-star of a son.

And he and his concerns were the single source of strong emotion that survived in her after half a century of this life! If, at the expense of any crime, she could have retained her empire over him, she would have undergone

a temptation passing the temptations of young people.

She felt restless to act now, after the discoveries she had made. Could she sit quietly by and let him go ahead, signalise himself according as a wild fancy should dictate, set homely decorous Bleiburg in a ferment by his flirtations and extravagances?

Evidently he had fallen in love with this little singer—what was her name? Mrs. Damian saw nothing very serious in that. But it served to turn her secret thoughts towards England in general, Diana Francombe and Larkmere in particular—briefly on speedy settlement in life for her son.

When Gervase that night, a little nervous after Lacy's revelations, came down to dinner, he was agreeably surprised to find his mother in better spirits than usual, remarkably talkative and indulgent. She mentioned Linda, and alluded to the Academy concert (for which Erlanger had sent tickets) with perfect carelessness and good-humour. Gervase, for the life of him, could hardly believe, even now, that she knew of the *fête*.

The same evening, without a word to any one, she wrote off a note to her son's uncle and ex-guardian. *He* should be the instrument to bring about Gervase's recall. Mr. Otho Damian, she knew, desired the match between Gervase and his cousin. Diana was, indeed, the wife *par excellence* for a proud, ambitious, poverty-stricken young lady-killer like Gervase. Though so young, it was easy to see that she took after her mother's family. She even wore her pinafores with a certain air and grace that astonished and struck admiration into the nursery-maids. The Francombe fortune, divorced from the

Francombe name, would, by this master-stroke, be secured to the Damians for present and future generations.

She saw but one objection; namely, that Gervase was, or considered himself, too young to leave his wild oats and marry. However, the chances were he might forget this if he fell in love with Di. She was not a girl likely to remain long unmarried; and Gervase would quickly perceive that now, if ever, was his opportunity.

There was another very substantial obstacle in the form of Sir Adolphus Brereton, suitor; but this Mrs. Damian dismissed. Why, he was forty, and Di only seventeen! The rival would simply be a stimulus for Gervase, who would take pleasure in cutting out the Baronet direct, and compelling the proud Diana to prefer himself, unrisen but irresistible, to Sir Adolphus, with his certain position and fortune, but his certain age.

Meanwhile Gervase, peacefully unconscious of the little web spinning around him, was paying his court to Linda on every likely and unlikely occasion—they were not many. She liked to torment him by her wayward moods, inwardly revelling in secret assurance of her conquest.

As the day of the concert approached, the hearts of all the Academy pupils began to beat in a distracting manner. It was to take place on the evening after Araciél's arrival, and thus serve as a kind of welcome to the artist, who had promised to attend. Every student bought his photograph: the girls to keep it in a scented case, or cover it with roses; whilst the boys, who ridiculed these sentimentalities, underwent none the less—such, at least, as figured among the per-

formers—secret serious pangs of excitement; hope and fear mingled or alternating.

With a single exception: Jonas, the crack pupil; Jonas, who had been counted competent to play Araciél's own composition in Araciél's own presence, and on whom Nature had bestowed the impervious chain-armour of cold fatuity. To all tremblings, all misgivings or longings, he, at sixteen, was as proof as Nielsen the sexagenarian himself.

If ever he gave fancy the rein, it showed him always the same picture—of Araciél crowning him with laurels, presenting him with the prize, and pointing him out to the students as his probable successor, and he, Jonas, accepting these honours calmly as one to whom honours are due.

The day before the concert there was a rehearsal at the Academy, which Nielsen had to attend, Linda also. She had been out since the early morning, and not yet returned when Laurence, late in the afternoon, went to the Professor's for a lesson.

'How did the rehearsal, the violin concerto, go off?' was the natural question that rose to the pupil's lips before they set to work.

'O, it went—went to the admiration of fools, at all events,' said Nielsen, with unsparing emphasis. 'Jonas is a hero, do you understand? We are all to learn from him. He played—you know how, for you have heard Jonas once, and to hear him once is to hear him always. But I told you never to talk of him to me. Thank God, he is no pupil of mine now, nor ever was but in name. Ah, it will be next year, when you are in the Academy, that they will see the difference between—Now what ails you? quoth the irascible one sharply, with a stamp of im-

patience at his pupil's change of countenance. 'I never mention the Academy but a black cloud comes over your face. Tell me the reason at once, I insist.'

Laurence faltered a little. 'Another time.'

'Not another time—now, this instant;' and he added, in a voice that for him was wonderfully gentle, 'Other lads are afraid of me, I hear, and perhaps I may have given them reason,' he said moderately; 'but if there's one who has no cause, it is you. Why should you hesitate to tell me anything that is on your mind, when I have always treated you as if you were my son? Speak out, then, like a man!'

Laurence looked up at him, striving for nerve. Was this the moment so long forecast and apprehended?

'That's right,' he said, very kindly and encouragingly. 'You're too nervous a thing, Laurence, by half; you grow pale and red like a woman. I won't have it. Now let me hear. O, confound that creature!' with sudden ferocity, as Lisbet knocked at the door. 'She has the strictest orders not to intrude during a lesson. I told her I should kill her if she dared again; and I shall keep my word one of these days.'

Old Lisbet was evidently prepared for the worst. She put up one hand to her face as she entered, to ward off the dreaded missile, at the same time interposing the door as a screen between her person and the avenger, as she extended her other hand with a letter, shouting out as quickly as possible,

'A message come for the Herr Professor from the Academy, marked "Important and immediate."'

The Herr Professor swore. Laurence took the letter from the

servant, who fled forthwith like one pursued, and handed it to the master.

As he read he uttered an inarticulate cry of surprise, and, it must be owned, of vicious gratification.

'That sneak Jonas—serve him right—has met with a trifling accident; it will give him a set-down that will do him good. He was tormenting an unfortunate strange dog—the inhuman fellow!—the creature retaliated—well done!—has bitten his fingers very severely. I am glad of it, heartily glad. He won't be able to touch his violin for a fortnight—soh!'

He threw down the letter, and leant back in his chair meditating, partly aloud,

'How about the concert now, the violin-piece? Araciél—the devil—what's to be done? He rose, and began pacing the room in an excited manner. 'To think we must have the chief thing struck out just because that ass Jonas— But I'll tell you what I'll do,' coming suddenly and dramatically to a standstill before Laurence. 'I have it: *you* shall play.'

'I?'

'You, my pupil. I send you as that imbecile's substitute.'

'But he is a student, and I am not.'

'I say that you shall play to-morrow night. You are not admitted yet, true, but you will be in a few weeks. It is contrary to all customs and all rules, but I will have it so;' and he drew himself up to his full height. 'I am the Academy' was legibly written on his countenance. 'This last time I shall have my own way,' as though time had ever been when he had not. 'It is an emergency, an exceptional occasion, that cannot serve as a precedent. If there were another

pupil in the school who could get through that composition, I would say, "Produce him." There is not one. You can. I would trust you without any rehearsal. However, you shall try it over with the band to-morrow morning; it is sure to go all right. Why that face! You are not going to tell me you are afraid.'

'No, no.'

'Then not another word; I shall not listen. Wait whilst I write a note for you to take to the conductor.'

'Master!'

The strange imploring tone and manner arrested him with surprise. He dashed down his pen, incensed at this futile attempt, whatever it might mean, at crossing his will, or rather delaying its accomplishment. He looked up with a frown, ready to annihilate the objections and objector by some withering sarcasm.

It had been the wild wish of the child's heart to play to Araciël. It had seemed hard to be shut out from participating in the tribute preparing for the artist. The temptation to grasp this sudden heavenly chance of sharing in it thus was infinite.

'What have you to say?' asked Nielsen harshly.

'Something I must have said soon, though not to-day perhaps, but for this. It forces me to. I want to ask you to forgive me.'

'What theatrical nonsense is all this?' growled the Professor, seriously angry.

'I'm in earnest, there's a good deal to forgive. These two years—' Losing all composure, Laurence broke off, and added fast and low, 'I know what I owe you, that no one could have taught me as you have done. All that I have seems like your gift; and yet you would never have given it me if you had known.

But if I came by it unfairly, I will let it go; if now you would have me give up the violin, I will, and never touch it again. I promise you.'

Professor Nielsen was at his wits' end. The strained agitated tone penetrated him in spite of himself. Laurence was in earnest, and Laurence's earnest was painfully intense.

He looked at his pupil blankly. 'Lisbet made a mistake, I see, he said, folding his hands in bewilderment; 'it was not Jonas, but you, who was bitten, and the dog was mad, I suppose.'

He now perceived that his pupil was handing him a letter, which he took and unfolded, Laurence's eyes watching his features as he perused it as eagerly as a prisoner the countenance of the magistrate.

'My own writing. *Sapperment!* Why, what is this?'

'Professor Nielsen begs to say that he never, under any consideration, has taken or will take lady pupils, and this is a rule to which he can make no exception. Should Signor Allori's pupil be willing to give up the violin, and commence some other study at the Academy of Bleiburg, Professor Nielsen will do what he can to assist her in obtaining admission from the authorities.'

He did not recollect at once, so completely had the circumstance passed out of his mind. Then, as he looked at the date and searched his memory, one by one the facts returned. Hastily he glanced up at Laurence. He understood.

The thunderbolt had fallen, and with crashing effect. His countenance was more distorted by violent passion than Laurence had ever seen it, even than on the day when he had turned Jonas out of doors. She tried to speak, but he silenced her with a hasty imperious gesture, and signed to her

to leave him. She obeyed. Was it a dismissal?

For a long, long while Nielsen sat burying his face in his hands. It was not the abstraction of thought, but of one slowly recovering from a violent mental disturbance. When he looked up, the first object he saw was Laurence's violin, lying before him on the table, where she had left it.

That was a memorable day for others in Bleiburg besides. About an hour earlier, Gervase Damian might have been seen leaving the church on the market-place with an elated air and step. He had seen Linda go in, followed her, and, favoured by the dusky shadows of the Rosary Chapel, they had exchanged a few words in private. Linda had news to tell. She had obtained a good engagement in the capital town of a little state not many hundred miles distant, and there, a few weeks hence, her professional career was to begin. Gervase bethought him, as he walked home, how he had warned his mother that if she insisted on staying at Bleiburg during the summer he should probably not remain a fixture, but take a holiday and a tour. The first was but his due, after six months plodding at German; and he now said to himself it would be worth while to run over to a certain ducal city and witness the *début* of a certain singer.

But that evening brought a packet of letters from England. Mrs. Damian pounced upon hers with avidity, and read them with much feigned surprise. Gervase frowned as he pored over his correspondence, nor noticed that his mother was watching him acutely.

At last, turning to Amy, she said, 'Quite a long letter from Mrs. Francombe, and an enclosure from Di to you.'

The girl took the note eagerly, and read:

'Darling little Amy,—It is all settled. Mamma has written; you must, you *must* not put off coming to us any longer. I promise you the most delightful party in the world; dancing, theatricals—everything. It is no use trying to say no. You are to come out. After all, there is only a year's difference between us, and you were to be presented next season. Now write and say we may expect to see you at Larksmere in August.'

Amy looked up, and halfshrieked with delight; then, stricken with sudden misgivings—'Mamma, you aren't going to say we must stay here?'

'Hush, hush, you excitable child;' and Mrs. Damian turned to her son. 'Gervase, what does your uncle say?'

Gervase handed the letter over to his mother. She knew the purport already, as well as he.

Mr. Otho Damian had broached an important subject, and urged all-important reasons for Gervase's instant return. It was rumoured that a post, which, as a stepping-stone to higher things, tempted him considerably, was likely to be vacant. Only competition—social competition—ran high. It was imperative that Gervase should be on the spot to put in his claims to favour. Mr. Otho Damian had spoken of his nephew to Sir Adolphus Brereton, who chanced to be a moving power in the nomination, and who had appeared well inclined towards him. But there was no time to be lost. Patron and *protégé* must meet, and here was the opportunity. Time, three weeks hence. Place, Larksmere in Hampshire.

Mrs. Damian augured well from her son's silence and thoughtful

constrained expression. Clearly he saw the importance of the crisis. So she said not a word, confident that he would, of his own accord, act as she desired, whatever this sudden departure might cost him.

Good-bye, then, to Linda; away with her image! Nothing to remain but the recollection of a game left drawn, a play broken off after the second act, a conquest relinquished half achieved. Just a boy's romance, interchange of roses and rings, and a very few fond words; and a face—a picture—to dwell on. Must it end there?

That same evening he had made up his mind that it must. The little business with Sir Adolphus admitted of no delay. That night his letter to his uncle was written; also his mother's answer, accepting her sister-in-law's invitation, and an ecstatic note from Amy enclosed. A fortnight hence they must be in England.

So Gervase went to his room looking as black as thunder. Never had Lacy seen his master so taciturn, so absent, so thoroughly perturbed.

Linda, half an hour after her return home from church, saw Laurence come in with a face that told plainly what had occurred. The child was pale as ashes, with a haggard look in her eyes that frightened her adopted sister. Was Laurence, so strong and brave and resolute, going to give way at last? Being caparisoned like a man, she was credited by Linda with having a doublet and hose in her disposition.

'Well, how did he take it?' she asked inquisitively.

'I don't know,' said Laurence, with a little gesture of helpless despair; and she related breathlessly what had passed.

'You were excessively foolish to come out with it at all,' de-

clared Linda frankly, when she had heard, 'especially with such a capital chance for showing off just open to you. Suppose you had played at the concert. Araciél might have engaged you for his tour. You could have told him your story, and gone right away from Bleiburg, and there need never have been any stir. Nobody but old Nielsen has any right to be angry with you. Why, what have you done with your violin?'

'Left it at the Professor's. I did it on purpose. Unless he bids me go on, I shall give it up—for always.'

'What nonsense!'

'Linda, I made up my mind I would, when I began with him two years ago, unless he got to think differently—I hoped then that he would. He has taught me as only *he* could have done; it is but fair I should do nothing without his leave. It would be like stealing.'

Linda shrugged her shoulders. Talking was hopeless, she saw. Laurence was a mad child, quite intractable and deaf to reason. Such a character could never get on in the world.

'Well,' she said presently, 'I must be off again. We have to rehearse this evening. I'm really very sorry you've gone and ruined yourself, all for nothing. Knowing old Neptune's temper, you might have manœuvred a little. You've blundered into a desperate hobble, and I confess I don't see how you're to get out of it.'

With which cheerful prophecy she left the room. Laurence shook her head. She had acted deliberately, and repented nothing, not even now when she was left alone to the mercy of such nightmares of anticipation of the future as an over-excited imagination must raise. It was dismal company for so young a thing. The darkness

came on, yet she lit no candle, but stayed where Linda had left her, in the stillness of the dreary music-room, in the same attitude, with a feeling of shipwreck. She had risked a great stake and lost it.

A rap at the street-door made her start, and her heart beat quickly with vague terrified expectation. The next minute the door was flung open, and in marched Professor Nielsen himself.

There was just light enough to show him the little figure sunk in the armchair, and starting erect as he entered.

For a moment professor and pupil faced each other in silence. Then the former spoke mildly,

'You left your violin. How did you come to forget it?'

He was carrying the instrument-case himself. Laurence's lip trembled violently; she could scarcely speak.

'Not forget—' she began eagerly.

'You left it with me, then; and I—well, see—I bring it back to you,' he said, with a kindness—tenderness almost—that was more overpowering than taunts and reprimands. The child burst into a passion of tears.

'It was you gave it me,' she said, 'and I cannot take it unless you say that I may. I want to give up all you gave me, if you think I do not deserve it.'

'Come,' he said, putting his hand protectingly on her shoulder, 'I don't wish you to suppose I think lightly of this matter. You have forced me into doing what I would never willingly have done. If I forgive you, it is not because I take back my words, but because there is something higher and stronger than my will or than yours. Music is above even its professors.'

It was not as master and pupil, but as artist and student, that they met to-night.

'You had to prove yourself outside my law,' he continued. 'You have done so. What I hold to be a general truth admits of exceptions. It does not touch you. But are you equal to the gifts born in you, is what I ask myself now?'

Laurence was calm again, and listened with a kind of reverence as he spoke, whilst his eyes, no longer terrible, rested with a more than parental solicitude on the young creature whose gentle influence had insensibly humanised him.

'You have a great future before you. Be true to it. Never think there are not other things which will one day seem greater to you, and more dear than art, and tempt you to neglect it. The sacrifice for a man is very great; for a woman it is infinite. If you flinch from making it, I shall repent I ever taught you. Promise me something.'

'Everything.'

'That your vocation, if it cannot always hold the first place in your heart, shall always be the first moving power in your life.'

'I promise,' she exclaimed, in enthusiasm.

Never seemed vow more easy, more delightful. St. Cecilia was her votive idol, the rest was trash.

'I trust you. And for my own part I am willing not only to forgive you, but to further you in every way I can; and O, believe me, genius needs furthering.'

To Laurence this was a sort of consecration, as solemn and final as the self-immolating vows of a nun. She gave him her hand. There was a pause; then suddenly Nielsen resumed, in his usual dry imperative manner:

'And you play to Araciël to-morrow. That is settled. Here is your solo part. You can look it over with me at once, and to-morrow morning you try it with

the orchestra. I arranged that just now at the Academy before coming here.'

Will Laurence ever be quite so happy as she felt at that moment?

CHAPTER X.

ARACIEL.

THE violin-king had arrived. An infatuated pupil, after lying in wait for an hour, had been rewarded by seeing him pass on his way from the station with wife and child, escorted by Erlanger, in a fly. He was now lodged at the Golden Eagle, and all the professors were leaving their cards on him. With Nielsen he had been closeted for a long while. No further particulars could be elicited by the most inquisitive students. In vain they loitered about the hotel-door. Araciël neither came forth nor looked out of the window. Curiosity and impatience must bide their time until evening and the concert should come.

It began early; the room was well filled with pupils, their friends, and friends' friends. The Damians were the only foreigners present, and marked out as such by much that was un-German in their appearance, though of the conventional English type there was little enough in any one of the three—all small-featured and dark-haired, mother and daughter with an easy grace of manner that in Bleiburg was believed to appertain to French women only. As for Gervase, his distinctly Celtic face contrasted curiously in its superior refinement with the surrounding Bersekers; attracting withal so much flattering observation from the fairmaids of Bleiburg as must have wrung the hearts of the afore-mentioned

gentlemen had not self-admiration made them very obtuse.

The spectacle of the pupils *en masse*, the girls all arrayed alike in white, was pleasantly striking. They stood there like a holy order, in their novitiate, vowed to the service of art. No doubt, as in religious orders, there were faint hearts and false hearts among the throng; still there remained a good leaven, and the cause they served was good. And when does not the mere sight of some hundreds of human beings, all with one thought and intent on one aim, act with a rousing power and stir up sudden feelings of universal fraternity?

There was a wrong side to the picture, though; and Gervase, before the first part of the programme was half through, had made up his mind that such probationary concerts were, and needs must be, odious. Your finished *virtuoso* or *diva* appears before you, and electrifies you with a finished performance that seems to cost the performer but little. You know well that Rome was not built in a day; still, forbear to pry into the secrets of the building process, the toilsome steps by which so many seek that excellence so few are ever to attain. As an epicure would lose relish for a feast were he to watch it cooking, so is it disenchanting to witness the earlier stages of musical evolution—exhibitions crude and unfinished, at the best seldom more than promising. A students' concert is a sort of musical fair, and it happens rarely that among the mass of commonplace articles exposed there shines a gem or two that an expert, who can tell a diamond in the rough, will single out from the rest.

It was now Linda's turn to sing. She was seldom nervous; her one apprehension to-night had been lest Araciël, who had not

yet arrived, should come too late for her song. But as she tripped up on the platform a little commotion arose on the side benches, and whispers of 'Araciél, Araciél!' ran through the stalls. There was a moment's pause, and then the renowned fiddler entered to take his place among the pedagogues in the front row.

Professors, students, Philistines, and brutes—to adopt Heine's famous classification of German citizens—all broke into applause. Every eye was upon him, and each eye saw something different. Not that Araciél was a chameleon; his physiognomy was as well marked and distinctive as Napoleon's, and among a thousand might have been picked out as a musician's if only by its likeness to certain of his famous predecessors. There is a stamp that reappears again and again among such—a stamp the original of which we are generally content to trace back to Beethoven; but it may be found earlier still, and with similar associations. Search the canvases of Giorgione and Da Vinci, you will recognise the familiar cast in the features of the lute and viol players of their celestial orchestras and Venetian pastorals.

It was thus, and as a hero to worship, that he appeared to those girls and boys; not a few of their graybeard instructors knelt to him in their hearts as a sovereign genius. Gervase's first irreverent impulse, however, would have been to tell this sovereign genius to go and brush his hair, which was abundant and rather long; whilst Mrs. Damian, who had heard him in London, saw nothing in the world but an ugly mediæval-looking man, who fiddled marvellously somehow. But the notion of any sort of necessary relation of quality between the individual and the

originality and excellence of his playing was one she could not entertain, being accustomed to regard musicians as merely mechanical agents.

But in the young lady who had just warbled the first notes of her song Mrs. Damian perceived less of the machine, if less also of the artist. Linda was charming as she faced her audience; the coquette disguised as a schoolgirl *ingénue*, in plain white muslin with a badge of ribbon, hair simply braided, and a demure touch in her expression, becoming a scholar in the presence of her masters.

Mrs. Damian thanked Heaven her tactics had succeeded, and Gervase been snatched away from the toils of this dangerous, designing siren. That girl would surely have victimised her poor boy in some fashion, sooner or later.

Secure of her voice, unimpaired in its freshness and strength, Linda sang without a qualm; confident of winning everybody. The old professors might shake their heads critically; but they were smiling under their beards. Only Nielsen frowned without stopping from first note to last. Araciél, after one curious, acute, exploring look, subsided into a state of amiable acquiescence, evidently indisposed to be severe upon so charming a young lady, and the first part of the concert wound up with a triumph for Mdlle. Visconti.

The second opened with Araciél's concerto for violin and orchestra. Jonas's name stood on the programme; and here a master of the ceremonies stood forth to explain how the young gentleman was prevented from appearing, but that as the Academy were specially unwilling to omit the piece, it would be played by a private pupil of Professor Nielsen's.

No name was mentioned, and when Laurence quietly came on the platform, 'Who is he?' was the question that ran round the room. There were not a score of persons in Bleiburg who knew the child even by sight, and beyond a vague idea that it was a younger brother, or at least some relation, of the girl who had sung last, no one present seemed to have much information.

The contrast with the preceding performer was startling. The composure, earnestness, and extraordinary self-forgetfulness of Laurence's manner were suggestive of one offering a sacrifice at an unseen shrine, rather than bidding for the smiles and flattery and envy of mortal men and women. Yet the pale, grave, seraphic face prepossessed that audience as becoming blushes and arch play of feature could never have done. From the moment when the first few bars had been heard a new sensation had spread itself over the room, a conviction that this was different stuff from all that had gone before. No painful struggling here with ill-mastered tools, no tricks and evasions; yet the excellence lay less in a precocious finish of style than in rare qualities, with promise of future development. No premature dwarf art, but a display of youthful talent, such ability of hand and head, as augured great things for such powers when grown to perfection.

'That boy ought to go far,' was the unanimous verdict of serious judges.

'Clever little fellow,' said Mrs. Damian, with a yawn, for she had found the concerto rather long. Herson had been attentive throughout, which surprised her. 'Why, Gervase,' she remarked carelessly, 'I thought you hated violin concertos and infant prodigies.' He laughed, and Mrs. Damian frown-

ed, on suddenly recollecting that this child was associated with that pretty, artful little minx, Linda Visconti.

Nielsen, after the first moments, never looked at his pupil, but kept his eyes fixed on Araciél's naïvely transparent countenance. At first grave and neutral, then deeply attentive, his features soon relaxed, and his face became beaming with pleasure and excitement. At intervals he turned round to Nielsen, nodding, and adding significantly, 'But it's extraordinary, it's superb!' with the expression of delight of a child at some unimagined holiday treat.

Laurence took heed of nothing but the music in hand until all was over, and a loud recall followed, bewildering to the novice in publicity. A word of guarded approval from Nielsen had been the utmost acknowledgment ever accorded yet; and now a whole roomful of artists and amateurs were clapping violently, as they had not clapped for Linda, as they might have applauded a great artist. In the confusion of the moment Laurence at first saw nothing distinctly; then looking down, behold there was Araciél standing up and applauding vehemently.

That was a very sweet moment. All her life long Laurence remembered it, even when later and greater successes had faded from her memory.

The remainder of the programme was gone through with, but merely endured by the audience, on whom it fell flat. Laurence did not stay to hear it. Those who, when all was over, pressed forward to see this mysterious child, and congratulate master and pupil, were disappointed. The young violin-player had disappeared, with Araciél's parting words of approbation to

sleep upon in the first place; and, in the second, Nielsen's parting admonition: nothing more nor less than a summons to be at the Golden Eagle to-morrow morning at ten precisely.

The injunction to be punctual was superfluous. Laurence was walking up and down in front of the Golden Eagle some twenty minutes before the clock struck, and the visitor ventured to go in,—and ask for Señor Araciél.

The porter shook his head. The Señor was not up yet. But Madame Araciél was, he believed, at breakfast; and Laurence, coming by appointment, was admitted.

Her heart, that had not quailed before a public audience or Araciél's presence, trembled considerably at the mention of his wife. Laurence's notions of wives were necessarily limited, and chiefly founded on Frau Erlanger, a queen of society in Bleiburg, half ashamed of her husband's musical profession, but who relied on her superior social connections for raising them both—an intriguing, talkative, showy woman, a second-rate coquette and an accomplished *mauvaise langue*. Laurence had seen her once or twice, and unconsciously feared she must be a type.

The sitting-room into which the visitor was shown was in such hopeless disorder that it was difficult to believe that the tenants, who were responsible for its condition, could only have arrived the day before. Araciél's business letters, his parts, his wife's gowns, his child's toys were keeping company amiably, as though accustomed to the arrangement. The lady, to Laurence's temporary relief, was not there. The room was unoccupied but for a small being of about seven years old, sprawling on the floor, who at the entrance of the new-comer set up a howl, not

of fear or shyness, but of an imperious desire for breakfast.

She was a pretty child—her prettiness sorely disguised by her untidiness, which rivalled that of the room: fair hair, cut short to save trouble, and falling in stray locks right over her face; buttonless shoes; stringless, but not stainless, pinafore; perforated socks, and ill-fitting blue frock, whose intense colour matched her eyes exactly. Laurence tried to soothe her, and soon succeeded, which was well, as a good half-hour elapsed before Madame Araciél came in from the adjoining apartment. The child was now perched on Laurence's knee, and chattering away in English, delighted to find one who could answer her in what was literally her mother-tongue.

Laurence started to her feet, putting down the little girl, who instantly set up a fresh howl at a fresh reminder of breakfast, conspicuous just then by its absence. 'Hush, hush, Cherubina,' the lady implored, advancing. 'Patience—papa will be here directly.' Then, as fair promises availed nothing, Cherubina probably knowing their net worth of old, she tried a biscuit from her pocket with better success, and the intractable infant came to hide her tears and gnaw her macaroon under cover of her mother's gown. Laurence meanwhile could not get over the surprise of seeing in Araciél's wife some one so unlike Frau Erlanger.

The face was still pretty and youthful, the features small, the expression both kind and happy—in a word, genial; blue eyes like Cherubina's; fair hair like the child's; a complexion only a little less fresh, and it must be owned a toilette very nearly as disorderly. She wore what might be politely described as a morning-gown: a loose wrapper that had evidently

passed the night in a carpet-bag. Her hair had been hurriedly fastened up in a knot under a cap that was expected to cover all deficiencies. But Laurence saw none of these things; she saw only the frank face, with that self-forgetful maternal kindness in it, that to the orphan was a thing unknown, looking at her as no one had ever exactly looked before.

'Araciél has told me all about you—all,' with a stress, not severe or curious, however, on the word. 'Sit down, dear; I want to hear everything now over again from you.'

Her gentle protective manner won Laurence's confidence on the spot, and she began her story. When she had finished, she saw the tears in the kind blue eyes; and though Laurence did not fully understand why they had risen, her own deepest feelings were stirred by the dawn of a kind of sympathy of which till now she had been too ignorant to feel its want.

'You have been a little wanderer, indeed,' said Madame Araciél, taking her hand; 'but now you are to come to us, and make your home with me. It is all settled. Professor Nielsen has resigned you to our hands. Araciél will teach you all you have to learn, and you will let me be your mother. I know I shall love you. Do you think you can love me?'

When Araciél, after another half-hour had elapsed, suddenly appeared, he found them in close and affectionate talk, Cherubina listening attentively to a conversation of which, it being expressly carried on for discretion's sake in Italian, she did not understand a word.

'You have made friends, good friends—that's all right,' he said, highly pleased, advancing to shake hands, much embarrassed by Che-

rubina, who was now clinging to his coat-tails, and emitting loud shouts, this time of exultation; for the other door had just opened, and the long-desired, long-delayed breakfast-tray was brought in.

'You will take some coffee with us?' he said to Laurence, who having breakfasted at six was nothing loth; and the four placed themselves round the table, where, Cherubina's clamorous appetite having been partly stilled, the others could continue the making-friends process at leisure.

It was Laurence's first initiation into domestic life.

'Am I to tell you the truth?' said Madame Araciél when they parted. 'I was afraid of you beforehand. I had heard of your exploit, and did not like it; but now I have seen you, I seem to understand how it all came about, and I like you the better for it. Do you think you will be happy with us?'

'I shall, I know I shall,' said Laurence impetuously, her heart swelling with the delightful feeling that she was no longer without friends—a gratitude so deep that it seemed as if it must influence all her life to come.

As for Cherubina, she had already taken such an immense fancy to the new-comer that the moment the latter gave signs of departing she began to roar, and was only pacified by the assurance that this treasure of a playfellow was speedily to return, to live with them, her mamma had said.

It was seldom that Laurence forgot her adopted sister's affairs in her own, but the entire revolution in her prospects which forty-eight hours had sufficed to bring about could not but occupy her completely. She rushed home, eager to find Linda and tell her of all these astounding changes.

Linda was alone in the music-

room, seated by the window, with her face turned away. Laurence ran up and threw herself on the foot-stool at her friend's feet, and hid her face in her lap, striving to collect herself.

'Linda, I seem hardly to know where I am—such strange things have happened! Araciél—'

She looked up and stopped, checked by the listener's vacant, distant expression.

'Araciél,' repeated Linda mechanically, as if signing to her to proceed.

Laurence continued, effectually sobered by this coolness,

'He and his wife want me to go with them on their concert-tour. They want me to make my home with them, for some time at least. Professor Nielsen says I am to go, and that it won't be living on charity, as I shall help him with his pupils, and play with him when it is wanted. Linda, Linda' (was she asleep?), 'do you understand?'

'Araciél offers to take you as his pupil, and he will bring you out,' said Linda unconcernedly. 'It is a very usual arrangement.'

'I thought you would be glad,' said Laurence, hurt by the listlessness of this usually vivacious comrade. 'I have been so happy with you. I thought you were sorry—now you have to go—to leave me alone.'

'Glad?' Linda repeated vaguely. Then, seeming suddenly to wake out of a trance, she began embracing Laurence passionately, chiefly to hide her own half-hysterical agitation.

What had caused it? Laurence could not guess. Had any one been criticising her singing unkindly? Had Bruno been sending one of his brotherly epistles of admo-

nition? Linda was holding a letter in her hand at this moment.

Neither. The letter was from Gervase Damian. He has been called unexpectedly to England, and must start immediately.

But to Laurence's pathetic entreaties to know what had distressed her, Linda would vouchsafe no reply. She tried to recover her spirits, but was not herself all that busy eventful day. It was inexplicable to Laurence how she could be so apathetic. Magnificent compliments on her singing, brilliant auguries for the future, flattering certificates, all the Academy honours were hers. What more could her heart desire? What was this mysterious sorrow which she could not reveal, and which made all these delights of no account?

Laurence never knew. The next morning Linda was more collected, and press of business forced her to be active. She was starting at once with another girl for Darmstadt, to fulfil her first public engagement, and Laurence was to leave Bleiburg the same evening with the Araciéls.

Laurence, often afterwards, thought of that night—the hubbub at the station, Araciél running in every direction but the right one after missing luggage. Cherubina divided between sleepiness and fretful moans. Madame Araciél loaded with miscellaneous packages. Herself in one of Linda's discarded toilettes, leading the child and starting off with her new friends in one train, Linda in another. The last thing she saw was a white hand waving to her out of the carriage-window. By dawn the next day both girls were far from each other and from the stage of their student-life.

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

XVI.

THE REVOLUTIONS OF INDUSTRY : W. H. PERKIN, F.R.S.

HISTORY, not so irrationally as some think, is the history of war and revolution. Even the slow but decided movements of policy strike the mind less than the incidents of some well-known battle. Waterloo to most men, whether they read or not, is a great volume of history. There, in that last conflict between Napoleon and Wellington, even the thousands of combatants are lost sight of beside the two striking figures of the victor and the conquered. All is concentrated into the struggle between the two men. We have not far to seek for a cause of what is truly natural, and which touches the feelings of mankind. Of the tens of thousands who fought, we do not and cannot know the names. Were one of them a kinsman of ours, then we should know the battle in his name; but for men whom we cannot embody we can conceive no deep emotion. It is not from want of fellow-feeling that our thoughts turn, whether we will or not, to those whose names make Waterloo, for each of these fills out a story. It is not only the Napoleon who fought and lost at Waterloo, but we see all in one and quickly the great Emperor of the West, who bore down the freedom of mankind, and threatened ours—he who after died an exile, imprisoned, entombed, in our island of St. Helena. We well know him in his dress as much by his cocked-hat as by anything, a figure familiar to the world.

So too the victor, who lived long, almost to this day. These men have pictures, statues, monuments; but the brave warrior who poured out his blood to death sleeps with his fellows under the rank turf or the oft-turned furrows of the corn-field.

A debate, a law, which to this day touches the fortunes of every one of us, is taken like the wind and weather almost without thought, and with about as little knowledge of how it began and has been worked out. Indeed the impersonal affects our minds but little; and yet when we can be brought to look at some of these studies they are as strange and as eventful as many a fight and many a campaign.

A song—what is lighter than that? There is a song, one hardly knows who wrote it or who composed it, and when we are told a name we have as small a notion of the man as when we knew not his name. The 'Marseillaise,' that heightened the horrors of one revolution, and which its charms of song never soothed, made ready the way for that of 1830. Forbidden, it was sought for more, and it was a greater enemy of the third Napoleon than any conspirator. If the Republic lives long it may become its triumph-song; but as yet the 'Marseillaise' heightens the records of every wild reactionary movement. In all the literature of music and song there is none

like this—so married to the sword and to the dagger.

The dead long entombed may leave words to move our feelings—words we can understand and take into our minds. Such, of those who live beyond the tomb, is the spell of Shakespeare. His school has been driven off the stage and small men fill his parts, it may be in a foreign accent or in a foreign tongue. Even to read his words is, nevertheless, enough to enthrall men's fancies. There is no tie binds new England so strongly to the old, and joins the two great halves of English kindred, as does the spell of Shakespeare, and in Germany it is making ready the way for a new league of the Germanic races.

All this is, however, so fully human; but where a subtle influence, nameless, almost unknown, penetrates into our homes, and changes the settled customs of a hundred years, or it may be gives a new purpose to that of yesterday, it is a marvel like the earthquake or hurricane, although it is so quiet and so still in its approach. The fashion that came in but yesterday, and yet to-day is doomed—some folly as we call it that is laughed at, some trifle of which no one knows the beginner—may bring a thousand artisans to want, and settle penury in many a pleasant home. Whether women wear glass or steel, ribbons, feathers, or flowers, will in all days, but most in these times of swift travel, act even on the savage in his wilderness.

The doom of the slave-trade has so stimulated ivory-hunting, that elephants are already driven away from vast regions. The want of real ivory creates a demand for the imitations, and the ivory-nut has been gathered by ship-loads from many a desert shore, until the overstocked market stops

the trade. Ostrich feathers were ever rare, and were a privilege of the wealthiest; but the farming of tame ostriches gives such a crop, that every girl in the streets of every English town has a feather in her hat.

Thus one perpetual revolution of industry is taking place, sometimes put down to the freaks of fashion—cotton buttons for steel, bugles for feathers—but more often the result of the theories of the philosopher in his closet turned to practical account by men of business.

The substitution of a mineral dye for a vegetable dye, of a dye dug out of the bowels of the earth for that of a flower grown under the sky in the open fields, was the result of the union of two series of investigations instituted with no reference to the definite end we have under consideration. It was natural that chemists should occupy themselves with ascertaining the physical constitution of the colouring substances of madder. These experiments occupied many men, and it should be observed that the results were confined in their influence to publication in purely professional journals as matters of scientific interest.

Another course of experiment which engaged chemists was the examination of hydrocarbons and allied substances—in general terms the products and combinations of coal. If we consider that coal for some purposes, as for lighting, exhibits the properties of animal and vegetable materials, say tallow and colza oil, we can understand broadly the nature of the alliance which exists between mineral or inorganic bodies and organic bodies, and the study of which has been a distinguishing feature in modern chemistry, leading to most remarkable and practical results,

and affording great encouragement to pure scientific research.

It has appeared extraordinary to some that the perfumes, flavours, and colours of flowers and plants should be imitated and simulated and extracted from the most filthy sources, and it may be said that the results are not equally pleasing. No lady now knows what is the scent she puts on a handkerchief, or applies as a relief to suffering. No man can tell what horrible constituent of Hamburg obliquity distinguishes the contents of the bottle with the pretentious capsule and brand. No poor woman has assurance of what replaces butter in the article under that name for which she has paid more than the full price. These are disagreeable methods of learning the unity of matter, and the many resources which Nature possesses when her secrets are made known.

Messrs. Graebe & Liebermann were among the first who conceived the idea of a common constitution for the madder colours and for coal products. It followed that if they could establish this, one set of elements could be substituted for the other. Graebe commenced some researches in quinone, a body allied to benzene, and afterwards, in conjunction with Liebermann, turned his attention to the alizarine of madder. They found the exact relation of alizarine in the hydrocarbon anthracene, which is contained in coal-tar.

As happens in such cases, the minds of others were turned in the same way, and many discoveries were made; but Graebe and Liebermann definitely applied themselves to the production of artificial alizarine, and in 1866 took out a patent, but it proved of no practical value. By this time the attention of Mr. Wm. Henry

Perkin was called to the matter. He was a student of chemistry and the son of a manufacturer, and after a long course of experiments he succeeded in obtaining a process by which the desired substance could be produced. So early as 1868 he was able to bring his results before the Society of Arts, and he has since steadily pursued his researches, and published a number of papers recording his own progress, and, what is of particular value to the scientific world, his failures. He has thus very greatly contributed to the advancement of this new and now important branch of industry. While his inventions have brought wealth to him and his family, he has by his application to pure and applied chemistry rendered very great services to the scientific world, which are duly appreciated. Many have laboured in this field, and various claims are put forward; but the discoveries and investigations of Mr. Perkin have put England in the foremost rank with Germany and France.

Having made his discoveries, Mr. Perkin proceeded to turn them to practical account. Fortunately for chemists, they are associated with manufacturers in their pursuits, and become men of business, instead of being helpless schoolmasters and scholars, as in some branches of science. While others are dependent on professional salaries, chemists have made large fortunes by patents or manufactures. Every man knows that by some judicious observation or careful research he may become acquainted with a property of matter which may lead to important results and produce great wealth. Thus he is under the double stimulus of fortune and fame, and an immense amount of unseen labour is gone through,

sifting through and over again the cinder-heaps of science, very often without any happy ending. What has been made of refuse products alone is something wonderful to contemplate. Whole branches of industry depend for their material on the waste of others. In many cases not a grain of substance is lost. Thus the goldsmith's filings and sweepings are reproduced as metal, and the diamond-cutter's dust is made available for fresh operations.

Mr. Perkin was fortunate in being associated with his brother, Mr. T. D. Perkin, who took charge of the business department. They set up works in 1857, little more than twenty years ago, at Greenford Green, near Harrow, and on the Grand Junction Canal. They were at first employed on the mauve dye, but afterwards were also used for the production of various other coal-tar colours. For these latter purposes from time to time some of the older plant, no longer applicable, was made available for new experiment or production.

It was not till 1869 that their manufacturing experiments for the production of artificial alizarine were commenced. The first question was as to the production of the raw material, the substance which men of science had entitled 'anthracene,' and the history of how it was dealt with is not without interest. At that period anthracene was unknown in the large trade of the tar-distillers, and was a scientific curiosity, not a commercial product. Experiments had, therefore, to be made upon its preparation, not only to obtain it, but also to get some rough idea of the amount that could be produced from coal-tar, as, unless it could be got in quantity, artificial alizarine could not successfully compete with madder.

In his experimental researches in 1855 Mr. Perkin had employed coal-tar pitch, and distilled it in iron pots. He therefore naturally selected pitch as his first source of anthracene; and having a number of iron retorts ready for use on the works, many tons were distilled. This resulted in a sufficient quantity of anthracene to give the firm confidence of a supply; and yet this quantity was one per cent—a bare one in a hundred—of the pitch distilled. The anthracene, however, was a more valuable product than the pitch; and the mauve dye was in still smaller quantity than the anthracene, and of a far higher price, yet it was the ultimate product of the residual or refuse matter of gas-works. Tons of coal had been converted into gas as a primary manufacture, and the mauve dyes were only a few pounds.

Having found that the last runnings of the tar-stills were richer than the first, Messrs. Perkin asked Messrs. Blott of Poplar, the large tar-distillers, to collect the last runnings. These were set aside to cool, and deposited considerable quantities of anthracene, which was collected in canvas bags; and it was found by this means that anthracene could be obtained on a large scale. Thus a new manufacture was established; for Messrs. Blott commenced to prepare this substance in quantity, so as to supply the Greenford Works. Other tar-distillers were then communicated with in England, and so much anthracene was obtained that it became unnecessary to distil pitch.

On receiving their new product Messrs. Perkin pressed it in hydraulic presses, so as to bring it into solid cakes of only one-fourth of the bulk. In time the manufacturers have come to compress

their anthracene before sending it into the market, thereby largely reducing the freight, fitting it for being better handled, and enabling it to be transported to a greater distance. Indeed, a ball once set rolling in the industrial world, there is no telling how far it may roll, and we get a regular history of a house that Jack built connected with small causes.

The mauve manufacture was one continuous series of experiments and successive improvements in the purification and preparation. Sometimes a good process proved injurious to the apparatus; sometimes an imperfection in the manufacture served as a substitute for some expedient. Residues were burnt in order to recover the potash temporarily used, and so to employ it again. Experience provided a succession of expedients, as is found in the life of all such manufacturers. Messrs. Perkin found it necessary to prepare their own chlorine, so as to obtain a more rapid production for the market of their material.

A very curious trouble to the manufacturers in making anthraquinone has been the large amount of chrome alum liquors produced. These are of a dark-green colour and acid character, and if turned into the sewers they soon give warning to the inspectors, while very little chrome alum can be sold as a colour, because it is of very limited consumption. Now the stuff is being reworked up into a chromate; but if it were not for the sanitary authorities it would have gone into waste. Another substance wasted on a large scale is sulphuric acid, of which 3000 tons are dissipated, which might be saved.

As sulphuric acid was largely used, a great destruction of the

iron vessels took place, the sulphuric acid itself being kept in glass carboys, a very dangerous expedient, and which has been the cause of many accidents. There is a story of the last century of a fire taking place in a carrier's cart in the streets of London, through the bursting of a bottle of vitriol, which destroyed silk, lace, and other goods to the value of 5000*l*. The German manufacturers having latterly employed fuming sulphuric acid, a very strong acid has been prepared, which is found to be without action upon ordinary tinned iron, and now it is actually stored in vessels made of that material. A demand arising for the production of sulphuric anhydrite, a new industry has been stimulated.

When the Messrs. Perkin brought their artificial alizarine into the market, although it possessed certain advantages over madder, yet, as they knew, they had to compete with the latter; it was therefore useless to ask relatively higher prices. At first the alizarine was sold to the Turkey-red dyers of Glasgow and Manchester; but as it produced a more scarlet shade than madder or its extract, garancine, it was mixed with these. In this way for some time it kept up the sale of madder while directly competing with it. Although mixed with garancine, it produced shades more brilliant than when garancine alone was employed, but at the same time not too scarlet for the Turkey-red buyers.

Thus was begun that flood of bright colours, which in the last few years have been so striking. They are not, as some have supposed, brought forward under the influence of taste or fashion in their cycles, under which colours fashionable and favourite for a day go out of use. Taste has had

as little to do with it as fashion. The manufacturers not only produced one new article—and the public run after novelty as novelty—but they produced a succession of novelties in colour. Strong is the saying that there is nothing new under the sun, and few things are brought out that seem new to us; but a history soon appears which tells that even these have appeared before. It is because novelty is this rarity that we cling to novelty and the shadow of novelty; and before anything can become stale, if we have not something new, we take up some fashion which is old and forgotten, and so looks quaint, odd, if not really new. The mauve colours and their successors have been true novelties, and have exercised a great influence on the female mind. Thus wherever mauve or magenta or some fresh modification could be applied to a material, it was welcome.

Some conditions tend to bring colours under stable influences. Green is a holy colour among Mussulmans, and its application is limited. Orange acts on some of the Irish like red on a bull. In one shape or another, and particularly as ribbons, in these days a new colour can be flashed in the eyes of women all over the world, and the consumption becomes immense. Thus it has been with these dyes. A Parisian milliner, man-milliner or she, could only impose magenta on a limited crowd; but the manufacturers could send it everywhere, and it would speak for itself.

The sense of colour is one which is widely diffused even among the lower animal world, and there can be no doubt that these chemical applications of recent years have produced a corresponding influence upon mankind. No invention more useful has perhaps equalled the effect of

these fleeting hues, changeable as are the skies.

It is very well known that many once bright streams of our northern counties now flow murky-stained with dyes, and are made unfit for the drinking of men or kine. Thus, as our population grows, the supply of water becomes less, and at length the pollution of rivers is dealt with by law. It is claimed for the new dyes that they do not much stain the streams, whereas madder is full of ground woody stuff, of which some ten thousand tons were yearly floated into the rivers.

In the supply of new material for anthracene, although abundant complications arise according to the kind of coal employed in the gasworks, as yet England has had great facilities, because coal is abundant and gas largely made. The coal that is most favoured in the works being cannel, does not produce the most anthracene, which is yielded by the Newcastle and commoner coals. These effects have to be considered in estimating the anthracene produced, because as it is in a raw state its value depends not on its quantity, but on the degree and nature of the impurities mixed up, and which have to be got out at greater or less cost. Thus, as it is with wool, good wool may be worth less than lower wool if the good wool is not well washed, but is left full of burrs and impurities, which give trouble in working it up. From want of care in these matters the produce of many countries brings a smaller market-price.

We have spoken of the abundant supply of the material for dyeing from the gasworks, and of the advantages we in this country possess; but such are the disturbing effects of invention that the character of the trade may be

at any time affected. Thus, if electric lighting largely extends, as it is in the way to do, that means a restriction of gasworks, and that, so far as these matters are concerned, means a reduction of gas-products. Then, as Mr. Perkin suggests, it would have to be met by distilling the coal at the pit's mouth.

At first, in 1870, the Messrs. Perkin were able to get anthracene at 9*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* per cent per cwt.; but as the demand and competition of manufacturers increased, the price in 1872 stood as high as from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.*

Another coal-product besides anthracene is used in the dye-works, and that is naphtha, which is employed for purifying the anthracene. The anthracene itself has an impurity which is very troublesome, and that is paraffin, another of these chemical products now of such value for lighting.

They say there is no rose without a thorn; and if this is so with flowers, so does it seem to be with dyes. In crude anthracene, and the oils accompanying it, there is a peculiar organic base called acridine, from its acrid properties. The vapour causes sneezing and coughing, and it gives to the oils accompanying anthracene a very irritating action when rubbed on the skin. In hot weather the workmen employed in pressing or otherwise working with crude anthracene sometimes suffer very considerably from the pain it temporarily produces. It will be remembered that some time ago stockings were sold of the most remarkable and tempting hues; but the ladies who bought them, not for the legitimate purpose of covering their ankles, but of displaying them in such glory, were subjected to severe retribution. Dreadful blisters were raised,

and the exhibition was continued under the doctor's auspices. This was laid upon pierodine. Of course the haberdashers gave certificates that there were no poisonous ingredients in the hose; but this gave no consolation to the victims. Certain hues became unsaleable for stockings or gloves, and the tempter in vain offers the bait to female vanity. Painting the face is not unfrequently attended with deleterious effects, or even with death; and hair-dyes containing preparations of lead have brought on paralysis. It may be a matter for grave consideration to moralists whether, as tartar emetic is put in bottles of wine, to which pilferers have access, a little acridine or pierodine might not be judiciously mixed with all artificial appliances for simulating beauty. Thus science might be made available in repressing the weaknesses of womankind, always excepting the danger of a mischievous damsel putting a little acridine on her father's fleecy hosiery.

Having said so much about anthracene, it may be well to see what its operation was upon madder and garancine. In 1859, and again ten years later, the value of madder was 45*s.* a cwt., and for the Turkey qualities 50*s.*; and for garancine 150*s.* The total import into this country was worth a million sterling; the quantity of madder being 305,000 cwts., or 15,000 tons, and of garancine 45,000 cwts. The garancine was brought from the Continent. The madder from Turkey employed a large amount of freight, chiefly in English steamers. Such was the effect of the competition that, in five years, in 1875, the trade was brought down to a third in quantity, and in 1878 the import of madder was only one-tenth of what it formerly was, or 15,000

cwts., and of the garancine not one-twentieth, and still declining. The value has shrunk still more, for madder in 1878 was worth 17s. per cwt., and later 11s. instead of 50s.; and garancine has fallen to 65s. Thus the whole value of imports, formerly of importance, and amounting to a million, is now between thirty and forty thousand pounds.

Of the Dutch madder imported the use is chiefly for wool-dyeing; and even the wool-dyers are trying artificial alizarine.

The displacement of commerce is the more noticeable, as it does not represent a real loss of trade, but the contrary. The madder and garancine so reduced, and which had been paid for abroad, were replaced by substances of which the material was of home extraction, and, indeed, as already shown, what had been a waste product.

This gave us a great commercial advantage; nor was this confined to an economy of nearly a million sterling. The possession of the new substance enabled us to compete very effectually with the foreigner in dyed goods, which we could produce more cheaply and expeditiously, and we were also able to supply foreign markets with the dye-stuffs.

Then we came to another aspect of the matter. Many of the new processes were of English invention; but as patents were not granted to our inventors abroad, the foreign manufacturers, after a time, produced the articles on cheaper terms, and besides supplying continental markets they even attempted to get into the home market. This was done by a commercial fraud, which remained for a long time undetected. In fact the unscrupulous Germans imported into this country the dyes under the name of garancine

until detected at the Custom House.

Although the scientific bases of the discovery were laid in Germany, the practical manufacture was established in England, and, for some time, Messrs. Perkin & Sons had it to themselves. At length in 1871 Messrs. Graebe & Liebermann were stirred up to turn their discovery to account, and began to supply the continental market. In time other firms in France and Germany engaged in the trade; but Messrs. Graebe & Liebermann held a large share of it.

So far as is known, England makes only one-seventh of the total amount; France and Switzerland each a smaller quantity; and Germany the lion's share of nearly two-thirds, commanding the export trade.

As to madder, its growth cannot now be started at a profit, and it must die out. The effect of this is a very great injury to the agriculture of Asiatic Turkey. There, as in many Eastern countries, it is not the growth of corn which is the chief object, but that of high-priced products, which can bear the expense of freight to distant markets. An introduction of such a product is a source of wealth, its destruction means poverty. The injury to the Turkish peasants will, therefore, be very great; but there comes into view a larger matter, which touches us more.

The introduction into India of the improved cultivation of indigo is one of the great feats of Englishmen, and the indigo factories of Bengal are well known. This trade is a great resource of India. We have seen what has happened to madder culture by the production of artificial garancine, and we may look for a like doom for indigo in the substitution of artificial aniline for its

colouring matter. It has been shown by Baeyer that indigo can be produced artificially; but at present no practical means are known to Mr. Perkin for carrying on the manufacture. There is every reason to believe that before many years this will be effected, and then, as he anticipates, the cultivation of the indigo plant will share the fate of madder. That means the annihilation of the value of indigo factories and estates in India, the displacement of their English owners and managers and native workmen, the cessation of the local consumption of the dye, and also the stoppage of freight for our shipping in conveying indigo to Europe. In return we shall get the smaller freight on the chemical, and we may or may not have the supply of it, as Germany or Belgium may supply a cheaper article. The compensation we shall get will be in the saving on the cost price of the dye for our own use. Thus we have to face another example of displacement of human industry on a large scale under the subtle influences of scientific investigation, theory mastering practice, mind overcoming matter.

In compensation one practical application of aniline is in the constitution of inks, which are the basis of the Polygraph, Myriograph, Lick-'em-all-graph, and the many new processes which enable the merchant to throw off forty or fifty or more copies of circulars.

Mr. Perkin's career presents not only an example of a man reaping a large reward for his inventions, but of his retiring early with an ample fortune. By 1873 the dye manufacture had made rapid strides, and capitalists interested in it were making enormous profits, even of many thousands a year for a single partner. Thus

the Messrs. Perkin had offers for the sale of their works, and in that year were able to make an advantageous arrangement.

Nothing now remained but for Mr. Perkin to spend his life in ease, according to vulgar notions, doing no work, which some conceive must be the height of enjoyment, and laying out his money lavishly for his own amusement and ostentation. Some misuse great opportunities, and fortunes which might have been earned by hard and honest labour are so disposed of by the men, their wives, and children, as to be an injury rather than a benefit to society. Ostentation is a natural accompaniment of sudden and unexpected wealth, as also of wealth undeserved, when fraud has accompanied its accumulation. Palatial abodes, horticultural luxury pushed to extravagant limits, pictures bought not for the encouragement of art, but the indulgence of display, excite the adulation of the mob, the envy of the low, and the self-sufficiency of the owner. Several young men and women who might have led a life of honest industry are thrown on the world in idleness, and with abundant means for its gratification. Thus are stimulated influences which tend to the demoralisation of society. On the one side, persons without settled pursuits abandon themselves to reckless dissipation, or at the best to avowed indolence; and while some sigh to enjoy their lot, others look with evil eyes on the ostentatious indulgence in ill-spent wealth. Whatever consideration is shown for the worker who has made his own way in the world, there is little for the men and women who are the creatures of fortune, and too often the revilers of labour and of merit.

To obtain a competence is in

England happily no uncommon reward of exertion, and is a valuable stimulus to the accumulation of national and individual wealth. Its enjoyment, however, is another matter, and that is what few achieve to the full. It is natural that a man should look to share his possessions with his children, but in apportioning these shares he is apt to leave out of consideration other heirs. No man's wealth is in this day wholly of his own production, but it is due to the advantages he has received from the community in which he has been brought up. Well-thinking men bear this in mind in their prosperity, and hence we see those useful and munificent institutions which do honour to their founder and our country. A man's responsibilities no more end with the acquisition of a fortune than does his life.

Mr. Perkin did not forget this, and in his retirement from busi-

ness, and while enjoying the property he has created, being a young man, has devoted himself as much as before to those scientific pursuits from which his fellow-countrymen may reap honour and advantage. He has likewise been a liberal contributor to funds for research. He has had no reason to regret the course he has pursued; while acquiring fresh titles to gratitude, he has already received many testimonies of respect. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society in virtue of his scientific attainments, and has received such tributes as that Society and the Chemical Society can award to him, the Royal Society having at their last anniversary bestowed a medal upon him. It is to be hoped that he will live many years to pursue a useful career; and should further pecuniary success attend his labours, it will add, not to his cares, but to his means of doing good.

THE MYSTERY IN PALACE GARDENS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

CHAPTER VIII.

WAS IT CHANCE?

FOR considerably more than a month Mr. Hay remained absent from Stratford. It seemed, indeed, as though Doctor Dilton's hope was destined to be fulfilled, when suddenly once again he turned out of Angel-lane into the Broadway.

The season had changed; the scorching heats of summer were over for that year; the drenching showers of July no longer laid the carnations level with the ground; the days began to 'draw in,' and already there was a crisp autumnal feeling in the air.

The trees round about the Grove had donned russet hues, and to a fanciful observer their foliage seemed to shiver in anticipation of the coming equinoxes and the chill October weather.

Still it was a pleasant time. The days were sunshiny, though the nights might be cold; the roads and pavements were dry under foot; people had not yet begun to wear winter clothing; and the ladies shopping in the Broadway appeared in between-season dresses, which, while recognising the fact that summer had departed, did not rush in point of material to meet Father Christmas, who, whether accompanied by frost and snow, or mild open weather, always comes quite soon enough.

All along the Romford-road the stranger felt the influence of this change into autumn weather. The flowers that he before noticed in gardens by the wayside were dead and gone, and others, wel-

come, perhaps, but not so fair, were blooming in their stead. Dahlias had succeeded to roses, and nasturtiums were running wild over the faded carnations. The one thing which remained, and gave out its scent stronger and more welcome than ever, was mignonette. It perfumed the air; its odour mingled with the autumnal flavour, and rendered even that pleasant and mystical.

Mr. Hay walked on. Not a nice road now, the highway to Romford was only a degree more agreeable then. There were fewer funerals, and there was more country, but the country could not be considered beautiful; and when processions of mourning-coaches are constantly passing to a cemetery, it does not much matter whether there are fifty or a hundred per diem.

Mr. Hay did not like the road; from the first he had disliked it, but a power he could not define, an attraction he felt impotent to resist, had drawn him thither once again. He desired to know how it fared with Mr. Palthorpe; he wished to see for himself if Mrs. Palthorpe seemed happier than was the case on the summer's day when she spoke of their utter penury, and by implication contrasted her own position with those born Fortune's favourites.

He had been away for a long time, first abroad upon business, which detained him for a period quite beyond his expectations, and then almost constantly in Scotland with a dying grandfather, whose favourite he had been ever since

he was sent, a delicate child, to that picturesque manse situated amongst the hills, where the air was balmy with the perfume of wild thyme, and the scent of the pine forests was pleasantly pungent as it was wholesome; and now when at length he had some leisure it appeared as natural to him to turn his steps once again eastward, as though the people living there were his oldest friends.

And yet as he paced rapidly along there was a struggle going on within him. Some instinct warned him to turn back, bade him leave the Palthorpes, whether in weal or woe, unsought; but a stronger feeling impelled him to proceed, forced him unresisting to an end he might easily have avoided if he had ever looked fairly into his own heart, and not striven to delude himself with specious arguments and plausible excuses.

All the way he went he wondered whether he should find Mr. Palthorpe better or worse, living or dead; indeed, these questions had never for a day been quite forgotten. When he was abroad, when he was in Scotland, he kept constantly thinking of the sick man, of the flowers and the weeds in the little garden, of the quiet room where jasmine and roses peeped in at the windows; of Mrs. Palthorpe standing under the dark laurel-tree; of the morning when she called to him in the twilight, and he stood at the low gate looking at her, a white, ghostly, lonely figure, surrounded by the silence and the perfume and the solitude of night.

How would she appear to him? In perfect health, or worn with watching? in a dress such as he had last seen her wear, or clad in mourning?

It would have been easy for him

to write long before to Doctor Dilton, any one might have thought, and satisfy himself as to the state of that gentleman's patient, but he shrank from doing so. When he thought of the Palthorpes he felt as though they had been friends of his for years; but when he recalled the doctor's bitter words of warning, he remembered he had seen Mrs. Palthorpe but thrice, and her husband only once.

As he considered these things he walked a little faster. As some men drink deep to drown care, so he hurried his pace in order to stifle the warning voice which never remained quite silent.

In what case would he find them? He must soon know now; there, close before him, were the mean cottages, the little gardens, the shading trees, the Portuguese laurel. His heart throbbed quicker, and there was a look of eager expectancy on his face. He stepped forward rapidly, he put his hand over to lift the latch of the gate, and as he did so he raised his eyes, and saw that the house stood empty.

The curtains had disappeared from the upper windows, the shutters of the parlour were closed, the garden was a wilderness. They were gone. What could have happened? Had a change for the worse taken place? Was Mr. Palthorpe dead?

He remained leaning against the gate, looking stupidly at the house, in a sort of mute amaze, letting his glance wander over the neglected garden, till a woman living in the next cottage aroused his attention.

She spoke to him over the hedge, and asked if he wanted any one.

'Yes,' he answered, entering the garden and moving closer to where she stood. 'Is the gentleman—is Mr. Palthorpe dead?'

'Not that I know of; he was getting better when they left here.'

'When did they leave?'

'Three weeks since, or thereabouts. Once they got him out of bed, the hospital surgeon said he'd be better where there was not so many funerals passing (for my part I think they make the road lively and heartsome); and so when he could be moved they took him away.'

'Away where?'

'Out Epping part, getting on for Barkingside, I believe. I have never been there myself; but I am told it is a nice air, though for that matter the air hereabouts is good enough for anybody, I should have thought.'

'Do you know the name of the place to which they have gone?' asked Mr. Hay.

'I do not, sir. It is some farm, but I cannot tell you any nearer than that. The doctor could give you the direction, though,' she added, brightening up; 'he was wonderful good to them, was the doctor—always in and out, and rode over, so the nurse told me, the very afternoon they moved.'

'Thank you,' said Mr. Hay, slowly falling into a reverie even as he spoke.

'Is there anything more I can do for you, sir?' asked the woman. 'If you have come far, perhaps you would like to walk in and rest.'

Mr. Hay started, and answered, 'No, thank you; I have not come very far.'

Then he put half-a-crown in her hand, and, taking a last look around, passed out of the garden and closed the gate behind him.

'A real gentleman,' commented Mr. Palthorpe's late neighbour, contemplating the coin lying in her palm.

Once again westward towards London walked Mr. Hay; but this time he did not stride along

briskly; on the contrary, he pursued his way slowly and thoughtfully, with his head bent and his eyes paying but little heed to external objects.

He was debating within himself whether or not he should call at Doctor Dilton's. He did not want to go there, and yet he did wish to find out where the Palthorpes had removed. Should he decide to leave the Grove to his right, and let the sick man, now he was on the high-road to recovery, fade out of his memory? Should he go back to his office and his business, and never again see those people whose lives had crossed his so sharply, and aroused within him so unaccountable an interest?

He did not wish to become identified with them. The paths along which he had hitherto walked through existence had led him as far from Romance as Bohemianism, and he entertained about an equal dread of both on the morning when Doctor Dilton asked his name; and at the fear of even seeming to be mixed up with such an anachronism as a gentleman by birth and breeding lying stretched on a mean bed in a house fit only for the habitation of a porter or a mechanic, led him to suppress one very important addition to his name. He was ashamed of the interest he felt in the case, and he dreaded being chaffed about his 'adventure'; and possibly if he went to the doctor's, that gentleman might in some roundabout way discover his identity with the guest who had made one at Mrs. Marker's 'dance.'

The proprieties were strong within him: he had been brought up bound in their chains. As a child, as a boy, as a man, he had never even thought of overleaping those conventionalities which formed the rule of life with the

persons who surrounded him. As he had been taught so he believed; that which he had seen done was the course he elected to follow. No strong temptation coming in his way, he felt sure the ways of virtue were easy; no struggle ever taking place in his heart, he was confident that struggles never really took place in other hearts; that if a man went wrong, he chose his course of *malice prepense*, and selected the downward path out of the mere wantonness of sin.

Reared a Calvinist in morals and habits as well as in religion, he had no doubt whatever that his own ways and the ways of his own peculiar people were the only paths which could insure respectability and happiness in the passage through this world, and peace when the time came to depart from it.

Although to some extent his own views had in many respects been modified by the influence of the English opinions by which he was surrounded, yet it would not be going too far to say that the man was a Pharisee, and belonged to one of the strictest sects of that body.

His training had been strict and hard and inflexible, unburdened by troublesome thoughts about outside sinners and persons who lacked all backbone morally, and the perplexing human butterflies that it is so difficult to imagine are responsible creatures and possessed of souls at all. The laws laid down for his guidance were few, and, though never perhaps expressed in words, proved binding. First of all, a good man believed—that went without saying. He questioned nothing; he accepted what his Bible, as interpreted in the pages of the Westminster Confession, taught him without ever a thought of further inquiry. On this foundation other creeds,

likewise admitting of no dispute, were built. A good man honoured his father and his mother, was true to his wife, just to his children, fair in his dealings with his servants, paid his bills honestly, made money by strict attention to business and by neglecting to drive no bargain which could be driven without deviating from the strict line of rectitude. A good man would not go to a theatre; he would eschew frivolous society (ah! this good man ought not to have accepted Mrs. Marker's invitation); he would not consider beauty in marriage or think too much of a maiden because she was fair; he would be sober in his deportment and prudent in his speech. After such fashion had his people ever comported themselves. In his family there had been no 'wasters,' no 'profligates,' no daughters who brought shame on those connected with them; none of his kindred had aspired too high or sunk too low, or got into scrapes, or formed objectionable acquaintances, or entered into undesirable alliances. Men and women they had been careful to keep themselves to themselves; everything they did was weighed; all their actions could have been detailed without fear in a court of justice.

For the rest, if they had succoured—as very possibly they would—the man who fell amongst thieves, before they committed themselves they would have wanted to know all about him. They were cautious, they valued their good name, they liked to think in their flock a black sheep had never been seen. They did not give themselves airs of superiority, it is true, because pride was sinful; but they did feel they were very good indeed, and it was not even in their human nature to abstain from a thrill of pleasure

when they considered that, spite of all their advantages, they were not puffed up.

No one could consider such a school the best possible in which to train a man who had more than his full share of kindliness, more perhaps than a due complement of ready sympathy for his poorer fellow-creatures; and yet so far, Mr. Hay's education had stood him in sufficiently good stead.

In London there are always enough 'objects' which can be relieved through the agency of an obliging secretary. Nothing to do but send a cheque, or attend a meeting, or put down your name. Only find the money, and some philanthropist will kindly save you all trouble about seeing how it is expended. It is a sort of vicarious benevolence, which produces many thousands and millions of pounds in England, and manages to achieve remarkably little benefit after all.

Still a good sort of charity, and one quite safe for a man like Mr. Hay to practise. Better by far than running about the metropolis purchasing grapes and other delicacies for a total stranger. Safer and better and cheaper, as he found to his cost when, in the after days, he came to reckon up all that gift cost him.

How is it the French proverb goes? 'For the want of a nail the kingdom was lost.'

Well, in his case, as small a beginning produced as mighty an ending; for a man's life is of as much importance to him as a kingdom to a nation.

Should he go to the doctor's or not?

His impulses said 'yes,' his prudence said 'no.' It would not do for him to get mixed up personally with a man he might see at the end of a few months

sitting at a clerk's desk in the office of some acquaintance.

If the matter got talked about in the City he need never expect to hear the last of it—never.

There were people, he was aware, who could visit about amongst all sorts and conditions of men, and never be called upon to account for their conduct; but he was not one of them. Except at his grandfather's he had never gone into the houses of those below himself in station; and in that remote village of course everybody knew everybody. In London it was different. Already he had been perhaps foolish in this matter; but he need not go on being foolish. It was quite as well Mr. Palthorpe had removed. No, he would not call upon Doctor Dilton.

He arrived at this resolution and the Swan public-house simultaneously.

Here, to reach Angel-lane, it was necessary for him to cross the wide space in front of St. John's Church; and, as he did so, every event connected with the morning when he first beheld that building, standing out against the rising sun, rushed prominently into his mind: the white ghostly figure beneath the laurel-tree; the scent of the flowers, still heavy with the dews of night; the doctor's story; the sick man; the lovely lonely woman. He must think the matter over a little longer; he could not make up his mind just yet.

Unconsciously almost he turned along the Broadway as the most fitting place for his further reflections.

The pavement there is wide and even; rarely crowded, except on Saturday nights, when a stranger might imagine he was in the New Cut. In Angel-lane, on the contrary, Mr. Hay knew the side-path to be narrow and incon-

venient ; and from experience he was aware that, as a rule, the pedestrian had to choose between brushing the wall with his coat-sleeve, or being turned every minute off the kerb into the horse-road.

So he chose the Broadway as a suitable thoroughfare in which to reconsider the question. On the south side of St. John's Church he had decided not to go to Doctor Dilton's. On the north, and to him familiar, side it was more than possible he might come to a different conclusion.

As he proceeded along the outer edge of the pavement he passed a draper's shop.

The windows, large and handsome, were filled with goods suitable for the coming season—soft cashmeres, fine French merinoes, dyed in those rich brilliant colours then the fashion, but which, in later days, have given place to sad russet greens and autumnal-leaf yellows ; to browns that look as though gamboge were struggling with the more legitimate tint for mastery, and reds which seem to have been soaked for a long time in salt-water to tone their vivid hues down to the required shade of dull monotony.

Round these windows ladies, as was fit, congregated in large numbers ; and conspicuous amongst the jackets and mantles gathered to look at the stuffs, and silks, and velvets, and flannels, and furs, and cuffs, and cosy muffs, Mr. Hay's eye was caught by the flame of a bright scarlet shawl—a shawl worn scarf fashion over a black dress—drawn together by the wearer a little petulantly across the chest, and displaying even whilst it seemed to conceal the lines of a slight pliant figure, the droop of falling shoulders, the white purity of a delicately rounded throat.

It was she !

Though her back was turned towards him, though he had never seen her before in walking costume, Mr. Hay recognised her in a moment. Chance, Fate, his own will, that north side of St. John's Church, what you please, had solved the problem for this man who dreaded complications. Scarce three yards intervened between them. It was not likely he would adhere to his former resolution, and turn away from her now !

As he paused irresolute, watching her, yet not advancing to where she stood, Mrs. Palthorpe, having exhausted her curiosity, faced round, and in the act of doing so beheld her new acquaintance.

He took off his hat, and she came towards him from amongst the ladies, with a pleased smile on her lovely face, and yet shyly and diffidently, as though not knowing exactly how she ought to greet him in so public a place. If she had never known it before, she must have been taught her precise position in the social scale by old Mr. Palthorpe's will ; and she felt somewhat doubtful accordingly of how 'gentlefolks' would comport themselves when they met her where people congregate.

If anything of this sort influenced her—and no doubt it did—Mr. Hay's greeting must instantly have relieved her embarrassment.

The pleased expression of his countenance, his outstretched hand, his eager manner, could not instantly fail to dispel the timidity expressed by self-consciousness. What were all the ladies in the Broadway to him ? If the Queen had been there—the Queen surrounded by the princesses, and all the duchesses and marchionesses in the peerage, he would have been just as much delighted

to see her as was the case. Always supposing Mrs. Marker and Mrs. Marker's daughters absent, the presence of none of the female population of Essex made any difference to him; and he knew that his Upton hostess and the young ladies were still from home, because Mr. Marker had so informed him no later than the previous afternoon.

'I am delighted to have met you,' he said: contrary to wont, it was the man who broke the silence. 'How is Mr. Palthorpe?'

'Better; ever so much better, thank you,' she answered. 'We have moved from Stratford; but I suppose you know that. Have you been to the old house?'

In an instant his perplexity returned.

'Yes,' he replied slowly, 'I—I—was passing along the road—and—I called.'

'Are you going to Doctor Dil-ton's?'

'No; I was thinking of doing so; but it is unnecessary now.'

'You would not have found him, at any rate. He is away for his holiday. I should not much mind if he stayed away for ever.'

'You do not like him, Mrs. Palthorpe?'

'No; I don't like him at all,' she answered. 'The gentleman who is there now, and who they say will buy the practice, is much nicer.'

'But he did a great deal for your husband,' remarked Mr. Hay.

'Yes, I suppose so. Tom is always talking about his skill and his kindness; but, for my part, I think the hospital surgeon did more for him in one visit than Doctor Dil-ton in thirty.'

Again the vague sense of uneasiness, the feeling of a discord. There are instruments which, though perfectly and truly in

tune, jar upon the nerves of some amongst us; and, in like manner, there are sentences with which no actual fault can be found that offend our taste, though it is well-nigh impossible for us to say why or wherefore.

'Where are you living now, Mrs. Palthorpe?' he asked, the string she had touched all unwittingly still vibrating unpleasantly within him.

'O, near Wanstead. That was Doctor Dil-ton's doing, I am sure. Such an out-of-the-way place you never saw. If he wants anything extra, I have to come down and get it for him here. From week's end to week's end we never see a creature but the doctor and the people of the house. We are at a farm—Roding Farm; but it is best known as "The End of the World"—most fitting name for it too.'

'So lonely as that,' he observed.

'More lonely than you can imagine; why, my old home was lively in comparison, for there, at least, we did know all the neighbours roundabout; but here nobody seems to know anybody. Tom likes it, he says; but I am sure I don't.'

'Where should you like best to reside?' inquired Mr. Hay.

'In London, of course; there is always something to see there; but in such a place as this there is nothing to see, and there is nowhere to go. But I am keeping you, sir,' she added, with a sudden relapse into awkward shyness as she saw Mr. Hay's thoughts were wandering.

'No; O, no,' he answered abruptly, recovering himself. 'Are you going shopping now?'

'I have done my shopping,' she explained, holding up, as she spoke, a pretty fancy basket containing her small purchases. 'I

was on my way, when I met you, to the station to take the train to Leytonstone.'

'If you allow me I will walk with you so far,' he said; and as she made no objection to this—on the contrary, seemed pleased at the offer of companionship—he turned, and, side by side, they paced slowly along the Broadway.

When they reached Angel-lane he made a movement in that direction; but Mrs. Palthorpe remarking, 'There is a better way,' they walked on till they came to the next street, leading northward out of the main London-road.

'You are looking very well, Mrs. Palthorpe,' said Mr. Hay, as they quitted the direct thoroughfare, with its noise of vans and rumble of carts.

'I am quite well, thank you,' she answered, 'and I get plenty of sleep now: besides, a great piece of good luck has happened to us since I saw you last.'

'Indeed! I am very glad to hear it.'

'It was the most wonderful thing I ever knew,' she went on. 'About ten days after you brought those grapes—I have never been able to thank you for them before, sir, but I do now—I was sitting one morning, having a cup of tea, and thinking how in the world we were to go on without money, for aunt had written to say she could not spare any more for some time, when I saw the postman coming up the garden with a letter. I ran and took it from him—a blue ugly sort of letter: looked like rent, or taxes, or some trouble; so I turned it over and over, more than half afraid of what might be inside. I thought I would not open it, and then I thought I would, and then again I thought I would not. It was directed to Thomas Palthorpe, Esq.; and when I examined it

more closely I saw it bore the postmark of our county town.

'Well, I knew there could be nothing owing down there; so I opened the envelope, and took out the inside paper and unfolded it, and what do you suppose I saw?'

Looking into her eyes, uplifted to his—eyes now soft and earnest and without a trace of that evil fire lurking within their depths—Mr. Hay begged her to tell him.

'A bank-order for fifty pounds,' she said. 'Fifty pounds—just fancy! I sat down on the chair nearest the door, and looked at the paper stupidly. I could not tell what it meant or where it had come from. Just then the doctor walked in, without knocking, as he usually did, and found me, the draft spread out on my lap, staring at it with all my might.'

'What have you got there, Mrs. Palthorpe?' he asked—just as if what I had was any business of his. 'Some one left you a fortune, eh?'

'So I told him. I put the letter and order in his hands.

'I can't imagine who has sent it,' I said.

'He held up the envelope between him and the light, and putting in his finger drew out a mere slip of paper, on which was this writing. He read it aloud:

"From a Friend, who is sorry to hear of T. P.'s accident."

'Who is that likely to be?' he asked. 'Can you guess, Mrs. Palthorpe?'

'I told him I could not; that I did not know Tom had a friend in the world able to send him fifty shillings, to say nothing of fifty pounds.'

'He was surprised to hear you say so, I suppose,' remarked Mr. Hay.

'I do not know whether he was or not. I think not; at any rate, he

took no notice of the remark, but put his hands deep in his pockets, walked over to the window, and said, "Phew!" I never can tell what to make of him, I can't indeed.

'After a minute he came back to where I sat, and, stretching out his hand, said:

"Will you trust this to me for a minute, Mrs. Palthorpe? Wherever this order comes from, or whoever has sent it, I fancy it will do more for your husband than all my medicine."

'Where are we going?' suddenly asked Mr. Hay, at this juncture, as he perceived they were directing their steps towards the part-cellar, part-tunnel, part-cavern, through the gloomy shades and fearfully suggestive depths of which passengers, dwelling in that part of Stratford, were wont to make their exit and ingress from and to the station. 'What is this dreadful place we are coming to?'

'Only a passage under the railway,' she answered, laughing. 'I suppose you never are out our way—Wanstead way, I mean?'

'I never have been,' he replied; 'but if you think my visit would not harm Mr. Palthorpe, I should like greatly to call and see him.'

'He often speaks of you,' she answered. 'Being so ill, you might fancy he could not have remembered about your lifting him up that morning; but he does. He says he wanted to thank you, but the doctor hurried you away. And about the fruit, too. I thought he would be vexed, perhaps; but he was not. He did enjoy it so much. He was tired of beef-tea and milk and slops of all sorts. He told Doctor Dilton your friend must have a beautiful garden, for the grapes tasted as if grown in paradise. When he wandered after that, he

always talked of being among flowers and beside cool waters.'

They were at the station by this time; they had emerged from the tunnel, and were close to that grimy building, which looked as though the smoke from every engine on the then Eastern Counties line had been specially employed to embellish it.

'That is my way,' said Mrs. Palthorpe, pointing to another dark passage leading to dreary stairs, which conducted passengers to the departure platform of the Cambridge trains, and also of those proceeding by the branch to Loughton and intermediate stations.

He hesitated a moment, half disposed to accompany her to Wanstead then and there, and made a step in the direction she indicated.

'I do not think they will allow you to go up, as you have not a ticket,' she remarked, mistaking the purpose he had in his mind.

That decided him. He remembered instantly it would be intrusive on his part thus to force his presence on the invalid, and that besides he could not with any propriety go travelling about on railways in the society of so young and pretty a woman as Mrs. Palthorpe.

A beautiful woman, indeed, she looked, standing even in the dark dingy hall—a lovely bit of colour, with that bright shawl wrapped round her, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks flushed with exercise.

'Far too handsome,' Doctor Dilton had said, and said truly.

'Yes,' he thought, looking at her with another revulsion of prudence succeeding to the impulse that urged him to make his way to Roding Farm, 'far too handsome for any man to be wandering about with.'

Beauty, there can be no doubt, often serves for a danger-signal, which would prove of more use than it is if people did not elect to blind their eyes to the red light and run past the warning displayed, to meet with disaster a little further down the line of life.

'I will bid you good-bye, then, for the present, Mrs. Palthorpe,' said Mr. Hay, holding her hand as he spoke these words. 'I hope very soon I shall be able to get out as far as Wanstead.'

'A neighbourhood with which you would be delighted,' he remembered Doctor Dilton remarked, as they wended their way side by side along the Romford-road.

Well, he would soon have an opportunity of forming an opinion on the point for himself.

'After all,' he thought, 'it is a shame to have lived so long a time in London, and never seen the Forest lying close to it.'

CHAPTER IX.

LIGHT.

WHEN Doctor Dilton returned from his holiday, he found Mr. Hay established as a friend of the Palthorpes. He came and went at will; was regarded by the farmer and his family in the light of their lodgers' relative; had made himself popular amongst the labourers and servants, and quite won the heart of the man slowly and wearily crawling back to health.

He rarely came to the farm empty-handed—a book, a few flowers—something always of the most trifling value, but sufficient to prove the invalid had been in his thoughts—game occasionally, fruit on rare occasions. The doctor

looked on perplexed. His own interest in Mr. Palthorpe he could understand; but Mr. Hay's interest baffled him. If that gentleman had succeeded in patching up a shattered body in a most truly remarkable manner, piecing the broken fragments together as the Portland Vase at the British Museum is mosaicked and dove-tailed, so as to present externally an exact similitude of itself as it appeared before it was smashed to atoms, no amount of enthusiasm would have surprised him.

Further, had Mr. Hay been a more impulsive gentleman, one less stiff in his manners and not so strait-laced in his ideas, he could better have understood the charm he seemed to find in Mr. Palthorpe's simple nature and boyish blue eyes.

'He can't be coming after the wife,' thought the doctor, puzzled and curious. 'He isn't a bad designing man, I'd stake my life; and as for her, if he wants to get at her heart, he is not taking the right way to touch it. She does not care a straw about him. Bless my soul, if she disliked me a shade less cordially, I'd say she cared no more for him than she does for myself; but perhaps that would be going too far. Well, it is not my business, thank Heaven. I said all I am ever going to say in the way of warning to Hay long ago; and as for Palthorpe himself, I would not jeopardise his recovery for the sake of a hundred wives. I used to imagine Hay sent that fifty pounds; I don't think so now. Besides, they had another twenty-five this morning from some outlandish place in Cornwall, directed in the same handwriting as the other. I wish somebody would send me a few letters of that sort;' and he rode slowly down a road bordered on one side by part of the old Forest,

till he came to the Flats, where he put his horse to its speed and galloped across the turf, beside hollows where the summer ferns were dead or dying, past hillocks where there was scarcely a blackberry left for the gipsy children to gather.

The next day was Sunday. Contrary to his wont, between two and three o'clock Mr. Hay appeared at Roding Farm.

He apologised for what he called his intrusion by explaining he would have to leave town the following morning, and feared he might not be able to come out again to Wanstead for a fortnight at least.

'Before I went away,' he added, 'I wanted to see for myself that you were still improving, and also to ask if there was anything I could do for you.'

Mr. Palthorpe smiled, and from his easy-chair stretched out a weak white hand of greeting.

'Always welcome,' he answered, 'but especially welcome to-day. I have something to tell and something to ask you. The same kind friend whose generosity so materially assisted my recovery has sent another gift. Mira, show Mr. Hay the letter. Now, I can't bear to take his presents and never make an effort to say "Thank you" for them, and therefore I want you, please, kindly to write me out an advertisement and insert it in the *Times*, saying how grateful I am, and how much I wish he would let me tell him so in person.'

'If you consider it necessary; but do you not think that had he desired an acknowledgment of any kind he would have given you some opportunity of making it?'

'He might, certainly; but then, on the other hand, if I show no sign, how is he to know his letters have ever reached me?'

'I observe this one is registered,' answered Mr. Hay.

'Yes; and addressed to Roding Farm. Now, that strikes me as very curious.'

Mr. Hay did not instantly reply. He looked up from the letter which he held in his hand, and, in the momentary act of lifting his eyes, happened to catch Mrs. Palthorpe's gaze, which was fixed upon his face.

Suddenly the envelope fluttered from his hand, and while he stooped to take it from the carpet he answered,

'Some of your relations are, I suppose, acquainted with your present address.'

'Of course they are,' said Mr. Palthorpe, at once accepting this natural explanation of the difficulty. 'I never thought of that. You must ask your aunt, Mira, if she has given the direction to any one about Ravensmede.'

'But don't you think,' persisted Mr. Hay, keeping his eyes resolutely averted from Mrs. Palthorpe, and addressing himself to the husband alone, 'that the very mode your friend has chosen of offering assistance implies a desire for secrecy to be observed concerning it?'

'O, that would be quite impossible,' answered Mr. Palthorpe hastily. 'I could not receive such gifts and say nothing about them. Directly the former letter came my wife wrote to her aunt and told her; the doctor saw the order almost the moment it came, and then we knew you would be glad to hear of our good fortune.'

Mr. Hay smiled.

'When good fortune comes to you, Mr. Palthorpe,' he said, 'you are certainly not tardy in telling your friends the news. Most persons feel more inclined to speak of the blessings they lack than of those they receive.'

'Ah, but that is not right,' returned the other simply. 'I do not know how any one could keep silence, for instance, about such a kindness as this. I would give anything to know who thought of me and cared for me when I was stricken down.'

'There is this advantage about not knowing,' answered Mr. Hay, 'that in your heart you really thank fifty people instead of one. Fifty people you know might have sent such a remembrance.'

'Well, no, say half a dozen, though I am sure I did not think there was any person in all the wide world who would have done as much for me. How I should like to know which of my former friends this comes from!' and he touched the letter Mr. Hay had returned to him. 'I can't imagine why he will not sign his name.'

'Perhaps from his knowledge of you he fears you might return the money.'

Mr. Palthorpe shook his head.

'I should not do that,' he said.

'On the morning of the day I met with this accident,' and he laid his hand on his breast suggestively, 'I am afraid I should have said I would rather die or starve than accept such a favour from any man, but I should not say so now. When one comes to want a crust, it makes one thankful for a whole loaf sent in the very nick of time; when one comes to look death straight in the face, one feels the pride we think so much of in this world is a very poor sort of thing after all. No; I should not refuse help now even from an enemy, and I do not think I have an enemy on earth.'

There came a softened, sympathetic look into Mr. Hay's grave face.

'I will put the advertisement if you wish in the *Times* with pleasure,' he said; and then turning

to Mrs. Palthorpe, who was in her walking-dress, he went on: 'I see you were going out. Pray do not let me detain you. If my being here would not disturb Mr. Palthorpe I should like to keep him company for half an hour.'

Very eagerly Mr. Palthorpe said nothing could give him so much pleasure.

'I always feel better after talking to you,' he added. 'Go, Mira dear,' he continued, turning towards his wife, 'or else you will be very late. You will walk to Leytonstone, will you not?'

No; Mrs. Palthorpe thought it possible she might choose some nearer church. 'It is so dull,' she explained, 'coming back alone.'

'So it is,' agreed her husband quickly; 'but I am making all the haste I can to get well, dear, and then I shall be able to go with you.'

At which prospect Mrs. Palthorpe did not seem so much delighted as might have been the case before they were married. Instead of expressing any pleasure at the hope suggested, she gave her head a little impatient toss, and without further leave-taking walked to the door Mr. Hay held open for her.

'I suppose I shall find you here when I come back,' she said, when she got out into the little passage.

'I fear not,' he answered. 'I want to be back in London early. I have an appointment.'

She looked vexed, he thought, but she made no remark—only went her way down the gravel walk leading between the prim grass-plots to the gate. There she nodded good-bye, a thing Mr. Hay had never known her do before, and smiled—an attention as rare as delicate on Mrs. Palthorpe's part.

Pleasant looks were quite as scant with her as pleasant words, and none except those who lived

with her constantly could imagine what a very small amount of agreeable conversation she vouchsafed to any one in the course of a year.

'I am so glad when I can induce her to go out,' said Mr. Palthorpe to his visitor, as he resumed his seat: 'it is almost impossible to get her to leave me, and her health will suffer if she remains so much indoors. She was so constantly in the open air at her grandfather's, that the change to such a sedentary life must be all the more hurtful.'

'When a woman is devoted to her husband it is difficult to make her think of herself,' answered Mr. Hay tentatively. He had long desired to get this man to talk about his wife, and now the opportunity seemed presented for inveigling Mr. Palthorpe to enlarge upon the subject.

The young man turned his face towards the fire, and looked at the blaze thoughtfully.

'Yes,' he said meditatively, 'yes.'

True, it was only a general proposition to which he thus gave assent; but yet he seemed to consider the particular application which might be included somewhat doubtful.

'It has been very hard for her, very hard,' he proceeded after a moment's pause, narrowing the subject to the lady who had just left them.

'It has been very hard for you, I think,' supplemented his companion.

'O, you mean this illness. I was not thinking so much of that as of the whole position. I was wrong to marry as I did, Mr. Hay. I had no right to ask her to run counter to the wishes of both our families. You see I had nothing. I took her from a home where she never knew what it was to

lack every comfort, and you have seen for yourself all I could give her. I ought to have thought a long time before I allowed any woman to make such a sacrifice for me; but I was selfish and I was foolish. I had never known poverty or shortness of money myself. I never believed my uncle would cast me off utterly, and I did believe I could conquer the world. Well, you perceive what has happened.'

And he held up his wasted hand to screen his face from the glare of the fire, and perhaps also to prevent the leaping flame showing what was written upon it.

Mr. Hay remained silent for a minute; then he said:

'I suppose you do not mean that if you had to live the time over again—the last two years, say—you would not marry?'

'That is precisely what I do mean,' was the answer. 'I ought not to have tempted a young girl to leave a comfortable home for such a future as I could offer her. Of course I thought then I could give her a very different position; but thoughts are one thing and certainties are another.'

'What her grandfather said to me was: "Go to your uncle, and if he gives his consent I will give mine; only don't let there be any fooling about the matter."'

'Straightforward, at any rate,' remarked Mr. Hay.

'Yes, but I was not straightforward. I married her without the consent of anybody, and I had not a sixpence I could call my own. I had been brought up to no profession, I understood no trade. Let me work my hardest, I knew I never was worth the thirty shillings a week my friend's interest procured for me in London. And now I suppose I could not get that again; my friend is in China, my place is filled up,

and I am—well, I never was of much use, but I shall be of less use for the future.’

‘You must not talk in that way, Mr. Palthorpe,’ said his visitor, with an affectation of cheerfulness he was far from feeling. ‘I am not a rich man or an influential; but I think I could prove of use in this matter. We must, somehow, manage to get you a larger salary than thirty shillings a week.’

‘I should be thankful to feel I was earning that,’ was the reply. ‘We could manage very well indeed with seventy or eighty pounds a year. We don’t want much, and we could live in town; Mira would like that better. It was my foolish fancy taking that little house at Stratford. I thought I should prefer a place of my own, and I imagined she would miss the flowers if she was cooped up in London; but she says she would rather be in apartments, and they might be got more cheaply, you know. If you could help me to obtain a situation, Mr. Hay, after a little, when I can move about better, I would try to do credit to your recommendation. I don’t care what it is, I do not mind how long the hours are; I would work faithfully. I have not much, indeed any, business talent, I know; but—’

‘How would you like a farm, Mr. Palthorpe?’ interrupted Mr. Hay.

‘That requires capital, and I have no capital.’

‘True,’ said the other thoughtfully.

‘At every turn I have been to blame,’ confessed Mr. Palthorpe, with the humility which never comes till a man feels he has met with total worldly shipwreck. ‘Old Mr. Aggles offered, after my uncle’s death, to let us live at the farm if I would help him with the accounts, and so forth; but I

felt I must get away. It was only pride made me refuse his offer; the worst form of pride. I did not think I could endure to be spoken of as “young Palthorpe” when I had been called the young Squire. When I look back I could laugh, if I did not feel more inclined to cry, only to think of the notions I had when I came to London. I was to make a fortune at once. I had dreams of buying back the old place. I never saw a beautiful dress in the drapers’ windows I did not intend to get for Mira when I had money enough. Ah, London soon takes the nonsense out of people. At first I thought it strange every one I came in contact with did not recognise I was not a mere clerk, but Palthorpe of Ravelsmede Hall; and now, do you know, I find it very difficult to realise I ever had an uncle, ever was looked upon as his heir, ever went to college, ever was one of the idlest dogs on earth.’

‘I thought that Ravelsmede Hall was left to some charity.’

‘Yes; the will directed it should be sold, and the proceeds devoted to building and endowing a hospital in the county town. Perhaps my uncle had some sort of foreboding I should soon be the better for a bed in it myself. A Mr. Roberts bought the estate, and has, I hear, laid out a lot of money upon the house.’

‘Was it an old place?’ asked Mr. Hay.

If he had started a fox, Mr. Palthorpe could not, in his hunting-days, have been off quicker after it than he began running along the offered scent.

With his blue eyes shining, and his handsome young face—handsome still, though so worn with sickness and drawn with pain—turned towards the listener, he described the only home he



LIGHT.

See 'The Mystery in Palace Gardens,' p. 225.

had ever really known; photographed it for the benefit of the man who listened with head bent down, and a mind which took in far more than the inanimate details of the picture presented.

'Not a very large house, but comfortable; built of dark stone, rendered darker by the action of the wind and the weather. An old house, such as you often see depicted in Christmas Annuals,' explained Mr. Palthorpe, 'with terrace-walks and stiff yew-hedges, and broad stone steps leading down to the prim flower-garden.' And beyond the gardens and shrubberies lay what had once been the deer-park; but his uncle did not keep any. One way or another the estate had been shorn of many a broad acre, and the family stripped of a goodly portion of their revenue; but enough remained to maintain the house and grounds in good order, and to preserve a certain state when the owner received and entertained his friends.

The house stood on the side of a hill, and the woods rose behind it, forming a background of tossing boughs and waving branches; from the top of the hill you could catch a glimpse of the Isle of Wight, and the sea glittering away in the distance, and the ships like great white birds flitting by with silent wings; and then down on the other side, through the woods and fields beyond, there ran a path which led to the farmhouse, where the young fellow met his fate.

'I had known her all my life,' he said, 'or at least all her life; for she is three years younger than I am. When I was a little boy we used to go nutting and black-berrying together; but once after I was grown up, when I returned after having been away for nearly twelve months, I de-

clare I did not know her in the least.

'She had shot up into a woman all in a minute, I thought. I am sure I could not tell what I thought when I saw her. She was standing in her grandfather's orchard, and she had put some apple-blossoms in her hair; and she wore a light-blue muslin dress, and she was looking up at the white clouds sailing overhead, and singing a tender song softly to herself. And O, Mr. Hay, you who have only seen her battling with poverty, and tried with my illness, and worn with anxiety and want of rest, cannot imagine what she seemed to me, as I came upon her suddenly, and yet so softly, out of the coppice, and over the turf of the paddock, that she did not know I was standing near, till she happened to turn and saw me.'

He stopped in his rapid utterance, and lifted his head, which he had been leaning back against the chair.

The fire was burning somewhat dim, and the winter twilight gathering coldly around. Mr. Hay neither moved nor spoke.

'When I think of it,' went on Mr. Palthorpe, and there was a suspicion of tears in his broken troubled voice, 'when I think of it, when I remember that day—and I never shall forget it—and think how she looked to me no whit less fair than an angel from heaven, and consider the trouble I have brought upon her, the way in which I have spoiled her whole life, I feel as though it is all more than I can bear, as if some day I should do something desperate.'

Mr. Hay rose, and going to a chiffonier where wine was kept, poured out a glass and held it to the sick man's lips.

'You are overwrought,' he said, 'and take distorted views. When

you are strong again these fancies will fade away. They have no more foundation in reality than the phantoms that troubled you in your delirium. I can help you on in the world a little, I am sure; I know so many business people. Do not harass yourself about the future; something good will be offered to you.'

They sat and talked for a little time longer; and when Mr. Palthorpe was more composed his visitor rang for the servant, and asking her to make up the fire, himself lit the lamp, and, drawing down the blinds and arranging the curtains, shut out the sad gray twilight.

'I must go now,' he said, taking the weak white hand in his; 'but before I go I want you to promise me not to indulge in thoughts of the past. You have a long fair future before you, please God, and I will try and help you to make a good thing of it.'

'I am not often so foolish,' answered the sick man, with a wan smile. 'I can't think what made me break down just now.'

Perhaps not; but Mr. Hay could form an idea, and after he had left the room the lines in his

face set and hardened, and he strode in hot haste away from the house, as though he were trying to shake off something which would not be left behind.

Turning out of the lane which led to Roding Farm he soon found himself at a point where two roads met—one led straight down to the Flats, the other to Leytonstone.

For a moment he hesitated—only a second; then saying, 'No; I won't go that way,' he chose the former route, and plunged among the shadows of the trees.

Before he reached the wide stretch of common-land lying between Forest Gate and Ilford he again changed his course. Entering the Lower Forest, as it was then called, he made his way into one of those magnificent avenues which are the glory of that part of Epping, and walked on in the solemn silence, conversing bitterly with his own heart.

For that afternoon he had learned something which no casuistry could gainsay. He knew he loved the woman madly, senselessly, sinfully.

And he knew more than this also,—that he had loved her from the first!

THE WEAVERS' GARDEN :

A London Study.

'By coach to Bednall Green, to Sir W. Rider's to dinner. A fine merry walk with the ladies alone after dinner to the garden; the greatest quantity of strawberries I ever saw, and good. This very house was built by the blind beggar of Bednall Green, so much talked of and sung in ballads; but they say it was only some of the outhouses of it.'

So wrote old Pepys in his diary for the 26th of June 1663; and the record should be suggestive to all those who acknowledge nothing eastward beyond Threadneedle-street, and have been accustomed to regard Bethnal as a mere sordid fringe of poverty and misery, without a history, and with all greenness, except that of decay, withered and blighted ages ago.

It may be hopeless to attempt to restore the legendary and titular reputation of this forlorn and despised locality, and it is doubtless impossible to reinstate it in the respectful recognition of London society; but the memorials of the district were once noble and even royal what time Queen Elizabeth went hunting in Epping Forest, and lived in the quaint old lodge that still stands at Chingford.

Bednall—was Strype right in thinking that it should have been Bathon Hall, from the great family of Bathonia, who had wide lands at Stepney?—was ancient even then; for, apart from the ballad of the 'siely blind beggar,' the father of 'pretty Bessee,' and by popular myth represented as the

son of Simon de Montfort, have we not deeds and documents by the cartful, setting forth the holdings of the Knights Hospitallers at Hackney or the King's Hold? and were not the manor and mansion of Sir John de Shore-ditch, that doughty warrior in the reign of Edward III., places of note? Let us give Bethnal Green its due of the past, even if we choose to ignore its present claims. While Pepys was writing his diary it was the abode of a goodly number of gentlemen; for the adjoining village of Hackenay was of high repute when the Merry Monarch was wont to dine at the Black and White House with Lord Mayor Vynner, the jovial chief magistrate who held his Majesty fast when he wished to escape from a banquet at Guildhall, and swore he should stay to 'finish t'other bottle.'

But while Pepys was writing those *bric-à-brac* chronicles, which give a piquant flavour to the history of a corrupt reign, events were happening in France which were to make a new era in the village of Bednall Green. A great invading French army was about to send contingent after contingent to England, driven from their homes by the persecutions which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and in the suburb of St. Mary Spittle, afterwards known as the Spital Fields, a small colony had already established itself on the borders of those pleasaunces and gardens where gallants had walked so merrily with the ladies to eat

strawberries and idle away the summer afternoons. The persecutions of the Protestants—abated for a time by the Edict of Nantes and the false promises of Louis XIV. after the siege of Rochelle—had grown to a fury for exterminating 'the new religion.' The Huguenots who remained in France were hunted like wild beasts; those who attempted to escape and failed had their property confiscated, were tortured, and were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in the galleys. Yet six hundred thousand persons contrived to leave the country in fishing-boats; in the holds of coasting-vessels; concealed amidst bales of merchandise; disguised as sailors, mendicants, footmen, couriers, and even packed in cases or baskets.

Numbers of the earlier refugees were non-resistants, not because they were afraid, but because they believed it unlawful to resort to carnal weapons. They had endured the loss of all their worldly goods, the burning of houses, separation from wives and children, who were carried to prison in distant departments, hunger, poverty, and misery, rather than forswear their faith. Hundreds of their friends, men and women, had been tortured, mutilated, racked, and subjected to the fierce brutalities of regiments of dragoons, who were taught that they were doing the Church and the throne loyal service by holding a carnival of slaughter. The pastors refused to leave the districts, and travelled about, famished but resolute, to visit the congregations of their brethren who met 'in the desert,' the wilderness of woods and ravines in the Cevennes and Lozère. It was not till four years after the siege of Rochelle, when the persecutors, mad with unstinted cruelty and repeated per-

jury, decreed the extermination of the Vaudois, that any regular attempt was made to resort to an armed defence. The leaders knew well how to fight. Witness the battle of the Boyne, when the mercenaries who followed James found opposed to them a hedge of French steel, and, as the swords of their countrymen flashed in their eyes, heard the terrible cry for vengeance which came from the Huguenots who went in the English ranks with William of Orange. It was by men like these that the bands of peasants who came down from their huts were led when the war of the Camisards commenced. It was a war against wild beasts by hunted creatures at bay. Suffering had done its work in a strange and awful fashion; for the peasants who lived on chestnuts and slept in caves and on hill-sides were themselves seized with a frenzy of fanaticism; and on a certain Sunday in July 1702 a band of fifty men, incited by a mystic preacher named Séguier, who, with scores of others, claimed to be inspired, broke into the house of a priest who had invented special tortures for the Protestants, and kept several of them imprisoned in the dungeons beneath the building. The house was fired, the prisoners released, and the priest slain while attempting to escape. The success of this desperate act aroused the whole district, and a war of retaliation became a war of insurrection. Séguier was captured, tortured, and burnt alive; but others were ready to take his place. The leaders of the Protestants in the Cevennes alone were able to control the disorganised bands of fanatics by converting them into a regular army. Roland and Cavalier put themselves at the head of a number of men in that

district, and with extraordinary ability trained and commanded the insurgents, made reprisals on the enemy by seizing arms and provisions, and maintained the war with varying success, until their defeat was accomplished under a new *régime*, while France itself was trembling with the first rumble of the revolutionary earthquake; and Voltaire, hating religion, which he thought was the same thing as hating the persecuting Church, had just concluded his exertions to deliver some of the martyrs to the Protestant faith.

All this time, however—from 1687 to 1706—enormous numbers of emigrants were escaping the spies and seeking a refuge in Holland, Switzerland, Flanders, Germany, and England. Of these there were 30,000 men who had been trained as soldiers and sailors; and while the larger proportion of their numbers went to serve in the Low Countries, eleven regiments were formed in the English army from French Protestant *émigrés* alone. Two years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 15,500 of the refugees had arrived in this country, and it was then that the true history of Bethnal Green began; for it was in that neighbourhood that they formed a community, which, like those of their brethren in Norwich and Canterbury, soon began to prosper by frugal industry, and the exercise of the handicrafts which added new and profitable industries to England. In Shoreditch, Spitalfields, Bethnal Green, they set up their looms and established dye-houses; and when Chamberlain wrote his Survey of London in 1768 there were about twenty French Protestant churches and chapels; the greater number of them being in this district, while above 13,000 emi-

grants had settled in or near the metropolis. The one French Protestant church founded by Edward VI. was, of course, inadequate to receive them; and as they reached London penniless, and had no other resources than their skill and industry, a collection, amounting to 60,000*l.*, was made for their immediate relief. This sum was afterwards increased to 200,000*l.*, and was called the Royal Bounty; for no other obvious reason than that royalty had nothing to do with it at that time, except the permission to apply the money to the proper object may be regarded as a royal concession. In 1686-7 about 6000 persons were relieved, and in 1688 27,000 persons received assistance; while others were relieved by those *émigrés* who had not lost the whole of their possessions, or had so prospered as to be able to find employment for their compatriots. Whatever may have been the proportion of the money subscribed by English people, it was a profitable investment for London. The refugees, peaceable, law-abiding, devout, thrifty, temperate, and mostly of refined and educated tastes, introduced new branches of trade, which, for many years, held a prominent place in the industrial resources of the country; while they and their sons aided in increasing the ranks of our army, in manning our navy, and in teaching in our schools.

Even the least educated of these people were for the most part gentle and courteous, serious, and yet gay with a childlike pleasantries, and had those simple tastes which gave to their colony a peculiarity entirely its own. In Spitalfields the long rows of houses, where the upper stories were lighted by long leaden casements that they might be better

fitted for the work, which requires accuracy of sight and touch, and the complete distinction of colours, had a somewhat gloomy aspect; but the rooms themselves frequently showed tokens not only of artistic appreciation, but of the former condition of those who dwelt in them. The ornaments, the furniture, the arrangement of the few poor household treasures, the flotsam and jetsam rescued from seizure by them or their fathers, proclaimed 'something above the common.' A piece or two of old china, a *pot-pourri* of Nankin blue (which would be priceless to a modern china-maniac) hanging against the wall, filled with dried lavender, rose-leaves, and sweet herbs, a curious picture, a rare print, an antique box or cabinet containing a few strips of 'point' lace, a watch of portentous mechanism, with quaintly cut watch-papers or an embroidered pad to protect the inner from the outer case, a snuff-box, a pair of high-heeled satin shoes of the true Watteau pattern, and almost inevitably a fiddle or a flute, with a few books of gavottes, airs, or concertos,—either or any of these things might be seen in the house of the *émigré* weaver, while his liking for birds and flowers was proverbial. Indeed, the collection of birds in Spitalfields was something remarkable, and doubtless led in later and degenerate times to the establishment of that bird and pigeon fair in 'Club-row,'—a thing few people will remember except as a Sunday-morning exhibition which attracted the modern black-guardism of Whitechapel, and had to be put down in the interests of decency and order. But this love for birds and flowers found more favourable expression in the open district of Bethnal Green, where within living memory there were

sundry rows of cottages in which the whirr of the wheel blended with the notes of tiny songsters stirred to emulation by the swift shrilling of the shuttle, and where to every weaver's cottage there was a weaver's garden. In later days some of the denizens of Spitalfields, descendants of the 'old French folk,' rented plots of garden-ground near some of the open spaces once devoted to the pleasure-lawns of those historical mansions which began to disappear because of the demand for small houses, and the desertion of Bednall by more aristocratic tenants. The garden was a holiday resort for summer evenings, and had its summer-house well furnished with handy lockers for bottled porter, seeds, and tools. When the weaver was 'at play'—a suggestive euphonym which meant that he had taken home one piece of woven silk, and was waiting for another web from the master—a longer holiday was made to Temple Mills, that ancient resort on the Hackney Marshes, where some semi-royal personage once employed the mills for making pieces of ordnance; or to the White House, where roach, dace, and perch rewarded the skilful angler; or to High Hill Ferry, where Leander could disport himself in a trim-built wherry. At Temple Mills a patriarchal tree was converted into an arboreal dining-room, by means of a step-ladder leading to a floored space between the mighty forks, large enough to hold a table and seats for half a dozen revellers on shrimps and mild ale. This tree was—nay, *is*—the delight of children of all growths,—for it is there yet—with the mills and the Ferry, and, far less altered than these, the great expanse of marshland, which in an autumn evening seems to stretch, as indeed it does, in one vast expanse of dense lush pas-

ture and intervening pollard-bordered stream to the Essex wealds, and so, straight as the crow flies, to the sea moaning on the coast. On a prime evening, when there is a gorgeous heavenly landscape in the sky, seen from the long grass, on which one can crouch and gaze upward at the marvellous changes of snow-capped cliff and ruddy shore to mountains of opal and sands of gold, that remind us of Raleigh's hymn, or song, beginning,

'O, for a scallop-shell of quiet,
A staff of faith to lean upon!'

there are few places like these Hackney Marshes, just a stroll from 'that horrid neighbourhood' of Bethnal Green. As the cloud mountains turn to flocks of golden-fleeced sheep moving away into the vast, to let us see a great serried crag all edged with fire, we can feel the breeze freshen, while we say after Coleridge,

'The stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark,'

and can feel the breath of the sea come straight across the slate blue, and touch our hair with the faintest trace of brine. All this is there yet, but the weavers' gardens are no more to be seen in Bethnal. Those little quaint plots, with borders edged with pearl-lipped oyster-shells and bits of bright glass and tile,—what a wealth of bloom the old Huguenot weavers contrived to make them! It would go hard if they did not yield a salad or a bunch of pot-herbs and a cabbage or two, as well as ten-week stocks, sweet-williams, jonquils, marigolds (for broth as well as borders), and clove-pinks and gillyflowers; while basil, marjoram, and sweet thyme scented the house, along with the faint odour of marsh-mallow, colts-foot, eyebright, and other field herbs set by for diet-drinks and *tisanes*.

Well, they have vanished, vanished with the descendants of the *émigrés*, most of whom have merged even their names, which have become Anglicised, and many of the good old customs, which it would have been well to Anglicise too, by maintaining them. What was to be expected when not only the colony, but the industry which it represented, dwindled, and almost disappeared from Bethnal Green? Weaving in London has died the death of an industry superseded by the natural advantages possessed by foreign competitors who have not yet been converted to 'Reciprocity,' much less to Free-trade, and there are scarcely more weavers than weavers' gardens. And yet, let anybody who thinks that there is no greenness in Bethnal go but a stone's throw, and he will see another and a vaster garden than those old refugees dreamed of. Open spaces they had in plenty, for there were Hare-street Fields, where the pond named after Kiddy Harris, a formidable footpad and burglar, was long a terror to belated juveniles; and there were Bonner's Fields, no less terrible for the seven trees, each with a hollow at its foot unfilled and unfillable, marking the spot where, in front of the gloomy mansion, once the abode of the tyrant bishop, seven sisters were burnt at the stake. Beyond that dark house the road lay through country lanes, by roadside inns, by farmlands and pasture, to Hackney Wick and the sedge banks of the Lea, to Bow Fields and Hackney Lammas Land on either side.

That whole space is the Weavers' Garden to-day, and marks another new era in the history of the old courtly appanage of Bednall; turned first into a French colony, and then into a grim unblooming wilderness of

streets and alleys, to which no invited courtier comes except to keep royalty in countenance, by attending to open a museum or to initiate a public improvement. It is well perhaps that royalty has given a name to the Weavers' Garden, for the hearts of these people are loyal, and the descendants of the old refugees, such of them as are left, are as faithful to our gentle Queen Victoria as their sires were to William of Orange and the House of Hanover. In fact they have ceased to be French except by heritage of half-blood, and by a certain subtle observant thoughtfulness and keen interest which suits the lines of their faces, where one may still trace the old family likeness. But they retain the old characteristic sense of bright contrasted colour, of rare form and foliage and of artistic design, as you may see when the summer comes again, and the wonderful 'carpet-gardening' of Victoria Park shows grand combinations of hue amidst velvet leaves and petals of satin and shot silk. By the great lakes too, where the burnished feathers of strange wild-fowl flitter, it is pleasant to watch these keen-faced men; delicate-fingered and broad-thumbed, as they point out to wife and children the beauties of the park that is nearly as much their own as Sir W. Rider's garden was his with all its strawberries.

Scarcely less significant of the link which yet binds the Victoria Park of to-day to the Weavers' Garden of the past is the fact that at its main entrance is a hospital where the needs of those who represent the old, as well as the new, industries of Bethnal Green find aid and healing. It is surely a good thing to know that amongst the poor of this still poor district the Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, standing on and beyond

the site of that drear old mansion of the persecuting bishop, is a cherished institution, and that many of the working men subscribe amongst themselves to aid its funds; while it is not uncommon for patients who have received its benefits to come back afterwards with a contribution saved in pence week by week that they may present a free-will offering, in gratitude for kindness which all but themselves have forgotten. Again, going straight through the main artery of the park to South Hackney, another building is to be seen standing in its own grounds, placid as though it were dozing gently, while its deep-hued bricks and high mansard roofs were being mellowed by the sun. It is after the fashion of an old French château, and has a history well befitting its proximity to the Weavers' Garden. A word or two as to its history. The 'Royal Bounty' distributed to the suffering *émigrés* in 1688 still left many aged, many sick, and many infant refugees without resources. In 1708 it was determined by some of the more wealthy of the *émigrés*, and by others of their countrymen who had come to England, to found an asylum to be known afterwards as La Providence. The idea originated with M. de Gastigny, himself a refugee in Holland, and Master of the Hounds to Prince William of Orange. He bequeathed 500*l.* for building, and 500*l.* the interest of which was to be spent on its maintenance. This put some other representatives of the old cause on their mettle, and by the time the thousand pounds had been left to accumulate for eight years a general subscription from Frenchmen and those Englishmen who recognised the benefits conferred on England by the French emigration had amounted to

a sum sufficient to purchase a piece of land called the Golden Acre, a precinct of St. Giles's, Cripple-gate, and close to the present St. Luke's Hospital. Here a building was erected to receive eighty poor persons; and a quaint old building it was, full of dim rooms furnished with wonderful bedsteads, queer spindle-legged tables, distorted chairs, and cupboards that must have afforded rare hunting-ground for generations of mice. In 1736 the building was enlarged, and in 1760 'The Providence' was completed and duly chartered by George I. to his right trusty and right well-beloved cousin, Henry de Massue, Marquis de Ravigny, Earl of Galloway, and other trusty and well-beloved gentlemen of the emigration, who had declined to return to France on any terms, even on the invitation of the King whom they disowned. This was the Hospital for Poor French Protestants and their descendants residing in Great Britain; and from this old building on the Golden Acre arose the new one on the other side of the Weavers' Garden, otherwise Victoria Park, where a company of elderly ladies and gentlemen, the children's children of the old *émigrés*, some of whom came after the Revolution or fled from the conscriptions of Napoleon I., live in peace, the conditions being that

they shall be widowed or unmarried and above the age of sixty years. Here, then, is a fitting memorial of Bednall that shall keep its memory green; and when the governors of the old charity meet at dinner (for which they pay out of their own pockets, by the bye) the international foundation of the charity is recognised by the invariable rule that the repast shall begin with *potage aux choux* and end with plum-pudding, but the regulation toasts are in French.

One word more about the beds and borders, the blooms and shrubs, in the great park. Every year in one of the autumn months a number of 'cuttings' of shrubs and flowers for setting are distributed to the people of the district who may apply for them in proper but simple form. Surely we may call this the Weavers' Garden; but where are the nooks and corners in which the dainty shoots will strike root and grow to make Bednall green once more? Who can say? The weaver and many another craftsman or his wife or some weakly large-eyed child may find a garden in their upper windows now, if only they learn how to tend it. That some of them do so make a band of fresh bright colour in the routine of their working lives is certain.

T. A.

THE SPRING CAPTAIN.

THE London season is ushered in by various outward and visible signs of the crush and gaiety that are about to take place. One by one the squares and crescents and terraces lose their deserted aspect: the old newspapers have been taken off the windows, the sheets and coverings have been removed from the furniture, the painters have departed with their pails and scaffolding, the little plots of grass in front of the houses have been cut and swept, and the walks freshly gravelled; whilst the tradesmen around look up their books and take stock of their goods, for 'the family' have arrived. Now it is that the carriage-builders bring out their newest vehicles and place them in the front of their warehouses, whilst the job-masters walk cheerily round their stables, and think of the prices they can command for the nags they bought for a song during the autumn. Operatic and theatrical managers advertise their companies and quote the opinions of the press upon the new artists who, after having starred in the provinces, are now about to astonish the fastidious metropolitan world. The clubs have taken up their heavy stair-carpet and made their arrangements for additional waiters. Lodging-house keepers are turning into their basement floors in order to have the more space for letting purposes. Pious divines, who pay their way by pew-rents, and who during the past winter have had ample opportunities of living more for the other world than for this, now begin to look up their most

effective sermons, and to study their most imposing attitudes. Cab-owners have brought up extra cabs from country towns to be added to their stock in the London yards. The shops crowd their windows with their most attractive goods, the principal streets have been put in repair, the parks have been trimmed, and the Row done up for the hundreds of horses that are soon to canter up and down it; the offices of the house-agents are filled with country visitors in quest of tenements in a fashionable quarter and at a reasonable price. On all sides there are bustle, activity, and awakened interest, for the season has begun!

From such symptoms the ordinary observer becomes aware that the old state of things has passed away, and that a new *régime* is on the eve of introduction. Yet your true Londoner knows that all this is only the prelude to the play, and that until the appearance of one great actor upon the scene the real drama or comedy of life has not commenced. The streets may be thronged with carriages, the Row may be crowded with equestrians and pedestrians, the columns of the *Post* may be filled with the festivities of the fashionable, the clubs may be so populated that to obtain a seat within their princely walls is almost as difficult as to obtain a seat in Parliament; the uninitiated may look upon the outward world, and greet each other with 'It's going to be a goodish season; town very full!' Still the arrival of one individual is absolutely necessary to consti-

tute the height of the season. As surely as the needle points to the north, or as the barometer prophesies the weather, so surely does the appearance of the Spring Captain on the steps of his club, or taking his walks abroad, calm, important, and resplendent, proclaim to all interested in the matter that the season is at its height.

The 'spring captain' is nothing unless fashionable; he only comes up to town when everybody is there and everything in full swing; and he quits the 'little village,' as he pleasantly terms the capital of his country, a fortnight before Goodwood. Why this distinguished personage should be so careful to identify his arrival and departure with the movements of what is called, down-stairs, 'high life,' is not very easy of comprehension; for the circle of his acquaintances is limited, and he has about as much to do with society as the penny postman has with the Cabinet. He is a man upon town instead of a man about town, and the difference between the two is all that is contained between social exclusion and social admission. In spite of his immense pretensions, candour compels us to state that the spring captain is an 'outsider.'

Yet he is eminently a representative man. Of society's representative men there are various kinds. There is the man who is careless as to his personal appearance—who wears short trousers and dirty white socks, whose hair is unkempt and beard unshorn, and whose large ill-fitting hat is always at the back of his head; who is shortsighted, who is always immersed in diligent perusal, and never met unless with books and pamphlets under his arm; who is given to much lecturing, sporting and amateur writing and reviewing; who adopts no opinions but his own, and silences all opposi-

tion by argument, contention, and incessant contradiction: he is the representative of culture, of progress, and of advanced ideas, which fail, however, to advance him. There is the man who is always starring before the public—who addresses pamphlets to Cabinet Ministers on most of the great public questions, who is incessantly badgering the political committees of clubs for pecuniary aid, who is great at election meetings, who is the ally of Working Men's Associations, and who is frequently to be met with in the lobby of the House of Commons, hanging on to any member who will be content to be bored with his society: he is the representative of political ambition. There is the man, generally in the City, and always in the Volunteers, who is the great critic of strategy and military manœuvres—who knows the *Army List* as a priest knows his breviary, whose talk is confined entirely to military matters, and who is never so happy as when investigating the military estimates, criticising the working of a new gun, or finding fault with the operations of a campaign: he is the representative of the military spirit of the country. A great warrior this man, and the bloodthirstiest of the bloodthirsty where the honour of his nation is concerned; yet in private life is he mild and exemplary, and is often the most active of churchwardens. The spring captain is, however, none of these things—he does not care for 'culchaw,' he knows nothing of politics, and he 'curses pipeclay:' he is the representative of swagger.

Yes, before the shrine of swagger he bows down; in his gait and demeanour he is the fond disciple of swagger; and in all that he does, thinks, and says, swagger in its most exaggerated form has marked him

for its own. As a rule your true man about town is indifferent to dress; he dresses like a gentleman, and it is his object to pass through the world without attracting attention, so far as sartorial art is concerned. Not so the spring captain. His visit to London is not an every-day affair. During the winter and spring he has thought much upon the subject; he has not quitted his dreary provincial quarters for the capital with any intention of hiding his candle under a bushel; nay, he has economised so that the light of his dip during the few weeks he is an external member of the gay world may flare up, and, by the brilliancy of its flame, attract much comment. There are some simple people—generally from the country and the suburbs—who think when once they have donned their finest garments, have walked in the Park without bowing to a soul, have mooned about what they call 'the West-end,' and have visited the haunts and show-shops of fashion, that they are really the *habitués* of society, and swells of a most alarming character. To this order belongs the spring captain. He feels that without all the aid of his tailor, hatter, and haberdasher, and without adopting that peculiar dismounted dragoon-like walk, and that remarkable pronunciation of the English language, he would be, what his inner voice plainly tells him he is, a nobody. He is one of those men who think they are bound to bolster up their position by constant swagger and self-assertion; as if a keen inquisitive world did not speedily detect all their little artifices, and place them upon their true level!

The spring captain, like everybody at the present day, of course belongs to a club—not to one of the exclusive clubs, but still a club.

He has a bedroom in one of the back streets near Pall Mall, and his life is not very *orageuse*. The invitations he receives to dance or dinner are very limited and seldom of a character to advance his progress in society. He, however, cheerfully accepts his position, and is quite content with himself, provided his tradespeople turn him out to advantage. His daily programme may appear to some monotonous, but it is strictly gone through, and seems to give him pleasure. He never, if fine, misses the Park in the morning; and indeed, to me, it would not be the Park without his attractive presence. I like to see him lounge up the Row with his gorgeously-gloved hands behind his back, and dangling his tasselled cane. A fatuous smile overspreads his face, and when he comes upon a crush of people he conceals his shyness by pretending to be anxiously looking for some one in the crowd. Yet, poor man, his fervent prayer is that he may meet no one. What an awful collapse would it be for him, with his glossy hat upon his head, his hair parted behind, his moustaches curled and brillantined, his dazzling scarf, his neck envired in the highest and starchiest of collars, his exquisite fitting frock-coat, with the expensive little bouquet in the button-hole, his delicate tinted trousers that a fly walking over would soil, his white gaiters and polished pointed boots—I say, what an awful thing it would be for him, with the eyes of the polite world gazing upon him, to meet some of his friends! The acquaintances of the spring captain are always drawn from the eligible set, but his friends do not belong to the same class. It is the one terror of his life that he should come across, when thus attired, like Solomon, in all his

glory, those he knows in the country. Fancy meeting his village apothecary—with whom he plays sixpenny whist during the winter, and whose wife, on Sundays and festal days, is much given to curious bonnets and green-satin dresses of the year one—in the Row during the very height of the season! 'Ullo! you 'ere! My, what a swell you are, John! ain't he, old woman? Well, we are like you. I and the missis have come up to see the sights and gay folk and do the fashionable. You're alone; come and toddle about with us, and show us who's who,' he fancies he hears them say; and he is ready to sink with shame into the boots he owes Thomas three guineas for. He is always alone; it is a characteristic of the spring captain to be solitary; and he knows if he meets any of his provincial friends he will be powerless to avoid them or to shake them off. It is the one bitter drop in the cup of his life, and has more than once marred the pleasure of his visit to London. It does me good to observe him on those trying occasions. I like to see him the perfect tailor's dummy—haughty, condescending, stolid; and then to see him suddenly greeted in the most affectionate terms by some little cad who in the country may be his bosom friend, and to watch him colour, shift from leg to leg, and whilst in his heart of hearts consigning the intruder to eternal perdition, yet daring not to display his mortification, but pretending to take an interest in the conversation; and then to see him sneak off subdued, crestfallen, and, O, so humble!

Having 'done' the Row—that is to say, having walked up and down it a certain number of times without recognising a friend, and having paid his penny for a chair

whilst he smoked his cigar in solemn silence—the spring captain solemnly wends his way along Piccadilly to his club for lunch. Here he is more in his element. Provided he pays for what he orders, he receives the same comfort and attention as the proudest lord. Having economised during the winter for his few weeks of metropolitan splendour, the spring captain does not deny himself a single luxury. At home he may be accustomed to a somewhat frugal board, and his establishment may leave much to be desired; but watch him at the club, and the stranger would take him for the most consummate *gourmet*, and the master of the most princely appointments. With what an air he enters the coffee-room, and gazes at the different dishes on the tables! and how severe he is upon the waiters, if they are in the slightest degree remiss in their duties! At home a maid-of-all-work may dish up his cold mutton, and draw his mug of beer; but at the club he is content with nothing less than the most careful and exacting service. He lunches with his hat on, because he has been given to understand that it is the custom with certain members of Parliament, and with others who imagine themselves to be of high degree. The spring captain is observant, and the most imitative of beings. He watches what the leaders of fashion in his club do, and orders and follows in their footsteps. He drinks nothing but the driest of champagnes and the silkier of clarets, though as a matter of fact he prefers pale ale or whisky-and-water. Everything that is just in season, and consequently very expensive, he makes a point of ordering. It does not matter whether he likes what he orders, or whether he has ever tasted it before, but, as he says,

it is 'good form.' Who does not remember that immortal spring captain who, having told the waiter to bring him some plover's eggs, took one of them up to eat, and then, in tones of the deepest indignation, bade the servant remove them, as *they were quite cold!* It is the spring captain who is so particular about his lettuce and tomatoes being served up in the French style, though the profusion of oil makes him terribly bilious; who has kidneys stewed in sherry, who sprinkles his ham with champagne, and who carries out to the very letter every gastronomic instruction he has heard of. Yet ask him what he really likes, and he would tell you a steak and a bottle of stout. But your true spring captain is always satisfied so long as he can make a display.

After luncheon comes the important question of how to spend the afternoon. Tobacco and the newspapers carry him on to four o'clock very well; but what is he to do then? He has no calls to make, because he knows no one. For the same reason he never has to put in an appearance at afternoon teas, at homes, or afternoon dances. He does not play whist, and he is dressed too well to soil himself with billiards. What shall he do? Many men under the circumstances might find time hang heavy upon their hands, but not so the spring captain. The public—any public—is his audience, and as long as he can appear before it he is perfectly happy. Solemnly he descends the steps of his club, and begins to take his afternoon's constitutional. He has brushed his hair and spiked its ends after the fashion of spring captains; a new flower blossoms in his button-hole, which he has bought from the hall-porter; not a crease or a bulge is to be ob-

served in his attire; his boots are as bright as polished ebony; and he feels, as he loftily surveys mankind, that he has nothing to fear. He is the most perfect of 'mooners.' Without coming across a single acquaintance, without looking into a single shop-window, without observing anything that is going on around him, he is perfectly content to wander up and down the town. His favourite haunts are well known. The Academy, the Burlington Arcade, Regent-street, the lower part of Bond-street, Piccadilly, and the Park constitute his London. Whenever he passes a shop in which there is a mirror, he stops and studies with pride his own reflection. Quite the ladies' man in his own estimation, he puts himself into attitudes whenever he has to pass the gauntlet of the fair occupants in carriages drawn up in front of the establishments of our great mercers and milliners. If a woman makes some audible remark in his favour, or a little boy admiringly exclaims, 'Lawks, what a swell that cove is!' he is made happy for the day. The exercise he takes over the London pavement is a splendid feat of pedestrianism, for he is always walking (except in rainy weather, when he frames himself in the bow-window of his club); and he sits down seldom, because it mars the fit of his frock-coat, and makes his trousers bulge at the knees. And so he passes his day, lounging about the fashionable streets, or uniting himself with the crowd that throngs the Park from Apsley House to Albert Gate, until it is time for him to return to his lodgings and dress for dinner.

Exercise has given him an excellent appetite, and he does not stint himself. A man may say, even in these epicurean days, that he has dined who sits down to

Painter's clear turtle, whitebait, sole *au gratin*, two kromeskys, a dish of cutlets, a spring chicken, a dish of asparagus, ice-pudding, and the whole washed down by a bottle of Perrier Jouet extra dry, and a couple of glasses of old East India sherry. The spring captain always orders the most perfect of little dinners, spends every sou he has upon himself, and reprimands the steward in the haughtiest manner if anything goes wrong with the details of the repast. How often has he told the wine-butler that the vintages were corked when they were not! and when he complains of the smallness and hardness of the asparagus, you would imagine that the kitchen-gardens 'down at his place' were one of the sights of the county, when perhaps he owns a thirty-pound villa and a back-yard.

After dinner of course comes the play. Occasionally the spring captain visits the Opera, and last season he went into ecstasies over Sarah Bernhardt, though his knowledge of French is confined to misspelling the dishes he orders from the club *menu*; but the theatre and the music-hall are his favourite places of recreation. He does not care for severe music and high-class comedy, but he is much given to *opéra-bouffe*, to burlesques, and leg-pieces. Cane in hand and toothpick in mouth, he is one of

the most devoted admirers of the Lotties and Nellies and Claras, whose theatrical photographs are seen in every window. At the music-hall he poses as a patron; he goes behind the scenes, is on familiar terms with the ballet, and stands a bottle of 'fizz' to the great comique; there he is reported to be a lord, and does not contradict the rumour. In his opinion the country is going to the dogs, since the doors of 'the Duke's' have been closed, and Cremorne a thing of the past. 'What is a fella to do with his evenings?' he sighs; and returns to his club, to finish a well-spent day over his cigars and sundry brandies-and-water.

A life of mild imposture is that of the Spring Captain. In the country he may be a worthy and manly creature; but so far as numbering himself amongst the *habitués* of London is concerned, he is the vainest and most empty of snobs. A foolish display in dress when dress is no longer a distinction, petty effeminate airs which only recoil upon himself, a conceit that would be offensive were it not too ridiculous, and an assumed knowledge of the world when he is the most ignorant of its votaries, are his main characteristics. However, he is harmless; he is so completely the fool that it is impossible for him to develop into the knave.

A LITTLE DINNER.

'My dear George,—I should esteem it a favour if you would invite your father's cousin, Alexander McDour, to dinner. He is in London for a few days, at Charing Cross Hotel, and a little attention to him would please me, your affectionate aunt,

'PRISCILLA LOVELL.'

What would I not do to please aunt Prissy! Had she not declared me heir to her thousands? Did she not always tip me handsomely on my birthday and at Christmas? And, present source of gratitude, had she not enclosed me a crisp Bank of England note for ten pounds? *Dear aunt Prissy!*

I sought my particular friend, Joe Grantly, and, having discussed the matter with him, I despatched a note of invitation to Sandy McDour. The messenger brought back an acceptance, and then we talked over all the people we knew from whom we might select a fourth for our little dinner.

'You and I are good company for each other,' observed Joe, thoughtfully watching wreaths of smoke that ascended from his pipe; 'but you ought to get some other old fellow to meet your Scotch friend; they'd understand each other, you see.'

Later in the day chance favoured me. I was walking in Piccadilly, when I came into violent collision with an old gentleman who was bolting out of Bond-street.

'Don't!' I cried, in a vexed tone, as I caught at my new hat.

'I didn't, sir—it was yourself!' ejaculated my adversary; and there

was that true ring of music in the tones of his voice which is only heard north of the Tweed. I looked hastily up, and behold, an old Edinburgh friend stood, first glowering, and then smiling, before me.

'My dear boy! I'm *glad* to meet you, though you've been a trifle rough on me in your greeting!'

'Pray forgive me—inexcusable carelessness,' &c., I murmured; and five minutes later I had mastered the important facts that the friend I had just met knew Sandy McDour well, and would be delighted to meet him at dinner at my rooms next evening at seven o'clock.

Next morning I told my landlord, who was once a butler, that I hoped he'd see to things being all right at dinner. He was clearing my breakfast-table, and replied a little nervously,

'Certainly, sir; but have you seen Mrs. Dick, sir?'

'Not yet,' I said carelessly; 'I'll see her about the dinner presently.'

'Better see her soon, sir,' with an uneasy glance at the door. 'Mrs. Dick is a very amiable woman, sir, but she's *firm*.'

I knew Dick was only Mrs. Dick's husband—not himself—so I pitied him.

'Won't she let you wait, do you mean?' I inquired, filling my pipe.

'I'm not sure as to *that*, sir; but I was thinking more about the dinner—it might be *spoiled*, you see, unless Mrs. Dick was consulted in time, sir.'

'I see. I say, Dick,' I continued, in my bachelor ignorance

(I did not know it was bliss then, and have had the folly to be wise since), 'you should show your wife you are master!'

'O, I do, sir,' cried Dick, with a terrified glance at the open door. 'I'm a firm person myself, sir; but,' hesitatingly, 'I think Mrs. Dick is firmer.'

I thought so too. A few minutes later I had a long and quite pleasant conversation with my landlady, whose ruffled plumes were soothed by a few words of gentle flattery as to her excellent cooking; and she left me with the assurance that everything should be in beautiful order, and that Mr. Dick would be most 'appy' to wait at table.

When the clock on the mantelpiece pointed to five minutes to seven my guests were assembled. Men are, as a rule, punctual as dinner guests. I think they like to enjoy and endeavour to unravel the mixture of delicious odours that pervades a small house just before dinner.

Mrs. Dick outdid herself in the meal she sent up, and Dick's brow was cloudless as he waited. We spoke little, for we were hungry; but when the last relay of plates was removed each man looked at his neighbour with a genial smile, and this showed me the wheels inside the human machine had been sufficiently lubricated, and that mind might now triumph over matter. Finally, Dick removed all but the spirit-case, and with a request that I would ring when I wanted hot water, he withdrew.

We turned our chairs to more easy positions, I stirred the fire to a blaze, and Mr. Craig (the Bond-street hero) addressed Mr. McDour as follows:

'Do ye remember the little discussion we had when I last saw you five years ago, as to the

management of St. Andrews College?'

'I do,' said Sandy; and there was a sideward nod of his head that said, 'And I'm glad to see you do.'

'Well, now,' pursued the other, 'you've altered your opinions since then, surely?'

'Not a bit,' proclaimed Sandy.

'Eh, now! can ye really say that?' incredulously demanded Mr. Craig; and forthwith the battle began.

Did you ever see a Scotchman preparing for argument? Much has been written and said about the war-horse arrayed for battle, the bull entering the arena, and other animals in trying situations; but I repeat again, did you ever see a Scotchman preparing for argument? There is a complacent smile on his lip and a firm gaze in his eye as he faces his adversary that tells of possible conquest and certain pleasure. There is also a little pity in the glance he fixes unflinchingly on the poor fool who dares disagree with him. But here were *two* Scots arrayed, and how deadly the struggle would be I knew not yet, but presently. In even measured tones the two went on, till Joe looked at me and I looked at Joe, and we both looked at the clock. A quarter to ten. I determined in my own mind that old codgers like these went to bed at ten, and, trusting in that delusive hope, I rang for hot water.

'The whisky will soothe them, perhaps,' I mused, as the steaming water, fragrant lemon, and shining lumps of sugar were put temptingly before the combatants.

Soothe them? The smell of the toddy inspired them as a breath from their native hills. The whisky lowered in the bottle and the steam arose from the tum-

blers, and hard at it they still kept.

Once a shout of triumph broke from Craig:

'Then you admit that so much is better than it was?'

'Aha!' explained Sandy, with a sideward jerk of the head and a wink that was deadly in its effect, 'but I *promised* that.'

On again.

I had a piano. Joe was a musician; and a happy thought struck him. He opened the instrument, played a few chords, and commenced singing,

'We are na fou, we're no that fou, I
But just a droppie in our 'ee.'

The struggle waned. Several long sips of toddy were silently swallowed, and then in stento-

rian tones the Scotchmen chimed in,

'For I will taste the barley bree.'

The savage breasts were calmed.

'It is eleven o'clock!' declared the two dissipated old gentlemen, as they put on their coats. They thanked me genially for their pleasant evening, and Dick was sent for a cab.

'For,' said Craig, 'you can drop me at Bond-street on your way, and we'll divide the fare.'

'Ay,' said Sandy. 'Saxpence apiece.'

'And,' I heard Craig say on the steps as they departed, 'we can have a few more words as we drive that I'm thinking will settle our dispute.'

I felt thankful these words would be said in the cab.

M. D.

LOVE AND WAR.*

By R. MOUNTENEY JEPHSON,

AUTHOR OF 'TOM BULLKLEY OF LISSINGTON,' 'A PINK WEDDING,' ETC.

CHAPTER III.

MR. BOLITHO, in his own boundless good-nature, was proof against his old boy-friend's ill-temper; so all he said, when Mr. Buddlecombe plumped himself down into an armchair, and retired with a grunt behind his newspaper, was,

'Ah, Buddle, my boy, you're not yourself to-day.'

'Never mind him, Mr. Bolitho; he's hardly a responsible being this morning,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe. 'Now tell us about the arrival of the regiment; we're longing to hear,' she added, in lower tones.

'Yes, do, Mr. Bolitho. Do you know, I think I must have caught some of your enthusiasm,' whispered Florence archly.

'Well, they'll soon pass,' replied Mr. Bolitho, without the slightest attempt at abating his voice. Indeed, of that he was incapable. When Nature had provided him with a *vox humana* she had altogether omitted the *piano* stop. 'I was up at the station and saw the brave fellows arrive; and I've had a delightful morning. I've cheered until I feel as if I had swallowed a nutmeg-grater; and I've shaken their hands until I thought my arm was going to drop out of its socket. Capital fun; first-rate fun!'

'*Sharkung a song goo*,' muttered Mr. Buddlecombe, who was

a dreadful old gourmand, and having very recently imported a long-sighed-after luxury, in the shape of a French cook, now entertained for the beautiful language in which his bills of fare were daily couched a tender passion, which he vented in an occasional French expression.

'I never,' continued Mr. Bolitho, in the same excited strain, 'recognised so fully the fitness of the term "*rank and file*," as when I shook those gallant hands, rough with the grasp of the rifle.'

Mrs. Buddlecombe was quite carried away by the heartiness of this sentiment; and so was Mr. Buddlecombe, but in a different direction.

'I should like to shake hands with the whole regiment; from the Colonel down to the smallest drummer!' she exclaimed.

'Mrs. Buddlecombe,' said old Joe Bolitho, seizing both her hands, while Mr. Buddlecombe's paper rustled ominously, 'my dear Mrs. Buddlecombe, that sentiment does you honour. It is a sentiment which should fill the hearts of all the countrywomen of those men who have braved death by battle and pestilence in a noble and complete vindication of their country's honour. The memory of their deeds should be vividly in our minds this day. How well I remember the graphic descriptions of the glorious fighting which appeared in our papers from time to time, and stirred the heart of old England to its very core!

* The author reserves to himself the right of dramatising this story, or any portion of it.

Something of this sort: "23d Welsh Fusiliers are hotly engaged; the shots fly like hail; the shells scream through the air; the rattle of musketry is incessant; but not a man wavers, except to fall, badly hit." Bravo, 23d! Well done, men of Harlech!"

Here old Joe Bolitho burst forth into a verse of the 'March of the Men of Harlech,' after which he continued, with unabated zest:

"The Rifles on the right are hard pressed; they are in danger of being cut off, and are fighting against fearful odds." Well done, Rifle Brigade!"

And here this distinguished corps, as the previously mentioned one had been, was treated by the enthusiastic old gentleman to musical honours as follows:

"I am ninety-five, I am ninety-five,
But to keep single I'll contrive."

'To keep quiet I wish *you'd* contrive,' muttered Mr. Buddlecombe, in a voice almost choked with emotion.

'That's the quick march of the Rifle Brigade, Mrs. Buddlecombe; to which, as the old 95th, they marched so often in the Peninsula to death or glory,' said Mr. Bolitho, who then resumed, with increased fire, "'Bring up the guns! Up they come; splendidly led!" Ah, as the song says:

"They're the boys as minds no noise,
Is the Royal Artillery."

'Don't mind a noise, eh?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, with forced calmness. 'Bolitho should join that corps. He'd be the right man in the right place then.'

"The guns are in danger!" roared old Bolitho, quite unconscious in his excitement of Mr. Buddlecombe's running commentary. "Highlanders, to the rescue! The wild pibroch rises above the din of battle, and down come the Forty-two to the charge."

Hoop-là! Bother it; I mean. Hoot, mon! "A cheer rings along the line; and on comes the splendid regiment to the soul-stirring sound of their bagpipes." Highland Laddie.'

And here old Bolitho actually burst forth into an imitation of the bagpipes. The effect on Mr. Buddlecombe was fearful. He sprang to his feet, dashed his newspaper down for the third time, strode up to Bolitho, planted himself in front of that worthy, and poured forth the following with a terrific volubility, which went like the rush of a torrent:

'Bolitho! Bo-litho! we were boys together; we knuckled down tight together; we flew the garter together; we fought together; we have grown up together; we have grown gray together. Consequently you are on those terms of intimacy with me which permit you to do pretty nearly what you like in my house. But I must draw the line somewhere. And I draw it at imitations of the national music of Scotland. *That's* a thing which no one could stand who hadn't been weaned on Glenlivet whisky; and I happen to have subsisted for the first few months of my existence on a somewhat milder beverage.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' laughed Mr. Bolitho. 'Brought up by hand, I should think, on a nice mild little mixture of cayenne-pepper, petroleum, and gun-cotton.'

'What *are* you to do with such a rhinoceros-hided old buffoon?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, turning on his heel with an air of the deepest disgust.

'Well, well, we sha'n't quarrel about it, Buddle, my boy,' said Mr. Bolitho soothingly, 'you say we fought together as young boys. Well, we won't as old ones. But for the life of me, I can't recollect that particular fight.'

'O, yes, we had, though, Bolitho,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, as if he had not the slightest intention of allowing his laurels to be snatched from him. 'O, yes, we had, and I whopped you. That was the term we used in those days,—*whopped*. I mayn't go strutting about blowing trumpets, and beating drums, and waving flags as *your* heroes do; but nevertheless I whopped you, Bolitho, and, what's more, you admitted yourself vanquished.'

'Very well, so be it,' said old Bolitho, laughing. 'History repeats itself, and I give in again. It always pleases him,' added the hearty old fellow aside; 'I think he must have dreamed it.'

'Hush! listen,' said Florence softly, as Mr. Buddlecombe bustled off on a fourth attempt to read his newspaper. 'I think I hear the band.'

'I don't hear anything,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe.

'Neither do I,' said old Bolitho.

'Yes; I *do* hear it,' said Florence, getting as pale as a lily and holding up a finger.

Then Mrs. Buddlecombe and Mr. Bolitho each held up a finger and stood intently listening, while Mr. Buddlecombe, who had now once more intrenched himself behind his *Times*, glared over the top of his paper parapet at them with savage contempt.

Florence was right. Love may be blind, but it can hear uncommonly well. Faintly, but unmistakably, the strains of a military band playing a quick march, mingled with the hoarse sound of distant cheering, fell on their listening ears.

'Yes, there they are, just leaving the station!' said old Bolitho excitedly. 'We shall only just have time to get down to the lodge and settle ourselves comfortably before they pass. Come along,

Mrs. Buddlecombe. Come along, Florry.'

And before Florry had time to answer, her eccentric old godfather snatched up the huge bouquet, seized her round the waist, and ran her through the French window.

For the fourth time was the newspaper dashed to the floor, and Mr. Buddlecombe rushed to the window.

'Florence! Come back, miss!' he shouted. 'If you so much as dare even to look—O, she's gone! She's clean off with that detonating old dotard!'

And here Mr. Buddlecombe reëntered the room in a towering passion, and confronted his wife on her way to the open window.

'Joshua,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, arresting her footsteps, and speaking in calm, collected, and forcible tones, 'you betray a deplorable want of tact and knowledge of human nature. If you are anxious to predispose your daughter favourably towards these young officers; if, in plain language, you want her to fall over head and ears in love with the first one she sees, you are, by abusing them, going exactly the right way to work. I speak from experience. I'm sure I never felt so much inclined to fall in love with you as when my sainted and prophetic mother,—*prophetic*, Joshua, I use the term advisedly—as when my *prophetic* mother said she was quite convinced you would turn out a perfect brute.'

Having poured this raking broadside into her consort, Mrs. Buddlecombe swept majestically from the room, and as she stepped out on to the verandah, looked over her shoulder with a beaming smile, and sweetly warbled,

'O, isn't he a darling,
The brave soldier-boy!'

For several moments the wor-

shipful mayor of Puddleton stood in the centre of the room completely dumbfounded.

'There,' he at last exclaimed to an attentive congregation of furniture, 'there's the effect of the military! For nearly a quarter of a century have Georgina and I hit it off with tolerable tranquillity. We have certainly had a protracted struggle for supremacy of many years' duration, but we have not, as a rule, if ever, descended to personal abuse. On the bare approach of the military, however, she becomes rampagious, calls me a brute, and sings an improper song. "O, isn't he a darling," indeed! I am not certain that after that revolting expression of Georgina's sentiments I should not be justified in suing for a divorce *a mensâ et toro*. Is not even the home of a mayor safe from the baneful influence of a licentious soldiery? There they go, the noisome noisy brood, turning this once pure and peaceful Puddleton into a pandemonium!'

This last alliterative sentence referred to the strains of the band, which during the above had been getting louder and louder, until now in a rich wave of sound they broke upon Mr. Buddlecombe's ears. Mingling with the music were the cheers of the crowd and the peals of joy-bells from many a church-steeple.

'O, isn't that enough to drive any one in his senses out of them!' ejaculated Mr. Buddlecombe. 'Are these legalised and caressed assassins and cutthroats to be allowed thus to turn the beautiful harmony of Puddleton's existence into this abominable discord? Not if I can help it. No military man shall ever darken my door with his presence, or may I be—'

Here most opportunely a sud-

den apparition at the open window diverted Mr. Buddlecombe's thoughts. It was that of a man, all in white from head to foot, enthusiastically waving a ladle over his head.

'*Vive la gloire!*' shouted the man in white, with his eyes almost starting out of his head. '*Vive ze allies of la France! Vive Napoléon! En avant!*'

And with one final and frantic wave of his ladle, he dashed on to join the throng of spectators.

'Dear me! that's my new French cook,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, quite taken aback for a few moments. 'Hi!' he shouted, as he recovered himself and rushed to the window; 'hi! I say! *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas what you're paid your salary for, mong garsong!*'

It is hardly necessary to add that this had not the slightest effect; and Mr. Buddlecombe was returning once more to his chair, with a superhuman effort at resignation, when a housemaid ran past the window, brandishing a dustpan and shrilly shouting,

'Three cheers for the soldiers!'

'One month's warning from this day, you shrieking Jezebel!' shouted Mr. Buddlecombe from the window.

Then a footman ran past cheering, and at him the worshipful gentleman hurled an *ormolu* ornament; then a scullerymaid, waving a duster, and shouting,

'Down with the perlice! The milingitary for ever!'

'O, do you know, if this sort of thing goes on,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, in tones of blank despair, 'the whole house will be converted into a lunatic asylum, and I shall enjoy the luxury of a strait-waistcoat and a padded cell all to myself. I—I—I feel at this moment that if it wasn't for my naturally phlegmatic and calm

disposition I should break down under the mental strain.'

So saying, Mr. Buddlecombe was just about to take a seat, when an obsequious individual of between fifty and sixty years of age, in a swallow-tailed coat and pepper-and-salt trousers, entered the room with a deference that was almost abject. This was Mr. Spigot, the butler.

'Why don't *you* go and cheer, Spigot?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, with grim irony.

'No, your worship,' replied Spigot, who was quite aware of his master's antipathy to the army. 'I have taken the liberty of coming to convince your worship by my presence that I wouldn't demean myself by doing so. I don't approve of the military, your worship. Far from it. The only good I know of soldiers is, that they're a bit of a hantidote to the police. When a young girl forms a hopeless attachment for a policeman, she cures herself by falling in love with a soldier. That's the only good I know of soldiers, and that, your worship, is a virtue I don't think worth going and hollering myself hoarse over.'

'Spigot,' said Mr. Buddlecombe warmly, 'you have proved yourself worthy of the position of trust which you hold. This is the first bright spot in the opaque darkness of a transaction pregnant with disgrace to Puddleton.'

'Certainly, your worship,' said the obsequious Spigot; and with a low bow he withdrew.

'I wonder what abominable folly my wife and daughter, under the leadership of that elderly buffoon Bolitho, are up to,' thought Mr. Buddlecombe, as he went to the window, and looked out. 'Hullo! what do I see?' he exclaimed, starting with indignation. 'Georgina, in the character of Beauty, is about to "crown Va-

lour," and is preparing to throw the bouquet at the Colonel with all that elaboration of gesture peculiar to the feminine method of taking a shot! Georgina, you're disgracing—'

What had happened? The band stopped playing in evident confusion—the first instrument to give in being the big drum and the last the piccolo, which on such occasions always will have the last squeak; while Mr. Buddlecombe's demeanour underwent a startling change. In the midst of a most scathing denunciation of his wife's conduct, his contracted brow relaxed, and he burst into a loud laugh. He held his sides; he smote first one leg and then the other; he rocked himself backwards and forwards, and he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. The shortest way to enlighten the reader, who is no doubt eager to trace this extraordinary effect to its cause, is to give the spasmodic utterances which escaped the worshipful gentleman himself in a series of gasps and wheezes and chuckles.

'O dear, she's crowned Valour with a vengeance! She's hit the Colonel's charger over the head with her bouquet, and he's reared up, and then put his near off-leg, or whatever they call it, through the big drum. And the whole procession is thrown into confusion. And old Joe Bolitho, who has rushed through the lodge-gates to apologise, is falling a victim to popular indignation, and is being freely bonneted by the mob. O, delicious! Yes, I'll cheer; I'll cheer *now*!'

And standing on tip-toes at the window, Mr. Buddlecombe put his hand to the side of his mouth, and gave vent to his feelings.

'Hooray! hooray! Go it! Give it to old Bolitho! Welt him!

He's always at his practical jokes ! He did it on purpose ! Duck him in the horse-pond, and I'll pay for any damage he does to the bottom ! Hooray !

These ebullitions speedily brought Mr. Spigot on the scene again, aghast and alarmed.

'Why, he's gone off his worshipful chump !' gasped the faithful old retainer, after standing for several moments in speechless astonishment.

'Come and cheer, Spigot,' exclaimed Mr. Buddlecombe, suddenly catching sight of him. 'Come and cheer.'

'Certainly, your worship.'

And Spigot, joining his master at the window, gave vent to a laboured 'Hooray !'

'Throw a little more derision into your cheers, Spigot,' said Mr. Buddlecombe sharply. 'You must remember they're *derisive* cheers.'

'Certainly, your worship. Hoo—'

'O, get away !' snapped Mr. Buddlecombe, relapsing into his former mood as suddenly as he had emerged from it. 'Be off with you !'

'Certainly, your worship,' said Spigot, adding, as he hurriedly sidled out of the room, 'He turns sour as suddenly as a barrel of beer in a thunderstorm.'

What was the matter *now* with Mr. Buddlecombe ? Jealousy was the matter. The green-eyed monster had seized him in the midst of his banter.

'This sight maddens me !' he exclaimed, as with clenched fists and scowling brow he stood glaring on the enemy at his gates. 'Georgina waves her handkerchief to the Colonel, and the Colonel kisses the tips of his white gloves to Georgina. Chartered libertine, beware ! She's mine. I'll call him out. I don't know,

though. He rather looks as if he'd come. No, I won't call him out. I'll call Georgina in. She rather looks as if she wouldn't. However, I'll try. Georgina, Georgina !'

Just at this moment, however, the band struck up again ; and Mr. Buddlecombe, after uplifting his voice in vain for several moments, retired into the room, and walked up and down it with an agitated demeanour.

'Ridiculous nonsense all this drumming and trumpeting ; only fit to impose upon a few nursery-maids and weak-minded youths,' he contemptuously ejaculated as he paced the room.

Nevertheless, he had not taken many turns when he became slightly influenced by the martial strains, and after a little he gradually and unconsciously assumed quite a military strut.

'Martial enthusiasm, indeed !' he continued. 'All stuff and nonsense. How ridiculous I should look pointing my toes and holding my head up in the air !'

With this last remark of his he became a striking instance of the difficulty we all experience in seeing ourselves as others see us, for holding up his head and pointing his toes was just the very thing he was doing as hard as he could.

'What senile folly, old soldiers fighting their battles over again ! How can they be such old fools ! I fought old Bolitho, though, when we were boys together. O yes, I did. And I licked him too ! O yes, one doesn't go bragging about fighting, but still we're all there when we're put to it. Rather ! How well I recollect it all ! But he doesn't. With a view to mitigating the horrors of war as much as possible, I stipulated, previous to the combat, that hitting in the face wasn't to be fair. At the

second round Bolitho hit me what we called then a one-er—a *fearful* one-er on the nose. I didn't wait for a two-er; but, with the wonderful promptitude which has characterised all my actions in life, I sank to the ground and claimed the victory. O yes! I mayn't go bragging about like Bolitho and these puppies in red coats, but I've got a spice of the fighting devil about me when my blood's up.'

A roar of laughter, which did not require old Bolitho's jolly countenance at the window to tell whom it came from, here rang through the apartment, and Mr. Buddlecombe subsided with a sheepish air.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Queen's Own Fusiliers speedily shook down in their new quarters; and officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, with a lively sense of the hearty welcome they had received from Puddle-ton, devoted themselves, in their several spheres, to the cultivation of that friendly intercourse with their civilian neighbours, which a very high authority on military matters has laid down as a duty of the highest importance, incumbent on all ranks of the army during the piping times of peace.

Of course after returning from active service leave was granted to as many as could possibly be spared, and the regiment was consequently reduced to a skeleton; but what was left of it fully upheld the regimental reputation for sociability and hospitality. Of all the guests bidden to the officers' mess old Joe Bolitho was the most honoured. There was a genuine heartiness about the old

fellow that at once took them all by storm. He was not only hearty in manner, but also hearty in deed; and for the first few days after the arrival of the regiment, until the officers' mess was open, his comfortable bachelor quarters were open morning, noon, and night for such of the officers as chose to breakfast, lunch, dine, or sleep under his hospitable roof.

One evening, within a week of the eventful morning so fully described in the preceding chapters, Mr. Bolitho sat in the ante-room at the barracks in the midst of a sociable little circle of Fusiliers. There had been other civilian guests at dinner; but all had departed except Mr. Bolitho, and his broad-backed old-fashioned swallow-tail was the only black coat in the room.

'Well,' said Major Burstrap, a fine fat old veteran, who commanded the regiment in the absence of the Colonel on leave, 'your townsmen, Mr. Bolitho, are wonderfully civil and attentive, with the exception, I must add, of your worshipful mayor.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' laughed old Bolitho. 'I'm afraid none of your cloth will get much civility and attention from my cantankerous old friend, Joshua Buddlecombe.'

'No, we don't expect it,' said an officer. 'We heard, directly we came here, that he was rabid against soldiers.'

'Rabid! I should think he was,' said Bolitho. 'Why, he called me a deadly upas-tree, blighting the innocence of his daughter, a few days ago, merely because I happened to mention something about the regiment in her presence. Ha, ha, ha! But, bless you, I don't mind what names he calls me, for we were boys together.'

'By Jove! what an awfully

pretty girl the daughter is!' said Lieutenant Spoonbill.

'Why, where on earth did you see her?' asked Mr. Bolitho, in considerable astonishment; 'for, to my certain knowledge, she has not been allowed outside the grounds ever since you marched in, and a pretty good piece of my mind have I given old Buddlecombe on the subject.'

'O, we saw her yesterday,' replied Spoonbill, 'from the top of the regimental drag over the high garden-wall, as we drove past. She was walking along reading a letter, and when she looked up she did more execution in our ranks, by Jove, than the Russians ever did. The only one who didn't seem hit was Warriner, who was sitting next to me.'

'Ah, Warriner, my boy,' said old Bolitho, with a kind and admiring glance at a handsome young fellow with his right arm in a sling, 'Cupid, after all, is more discriminating and generous than I gave the young rogue credit for. He remembers you have been badly hit already in the service of his father, Mars, and he aims his shafts elsewhere.'

'Yes, I suppose that's it,' said young Warriner carelessly, 'and I'm sure I'm much obliged to his impship for his forbearance.'

'Or is it the memory of another's charms, my dear boy, that renders you invulnerable?' said old Bolitho. '"So faithful in love and so dauntless in war," eh? Is that your case, Warriner?'

There was a kindness in the old man's *badinage*, which, together with the difference in the ages of himself and Warriner, cleansed it of all offensiveness, and the young man, who most assuredly would have resented such a liberty from any other stranger, allowed the old fellow's remark to pass with a

shrug of the shoulders and a good-natured smile.

'I am told,' said old Major Burstrap, who, having arrived at that age when the seat of the affections seems to take a downward direction, was anxious to change the conversation into a channel more congenial to himself, 'I am told that the Mayor has a first-rate French cook.'

Old Bolitho turned his eyes up, heaved a deep sigh, and stroked his waistcoat. The eloquence of this beautiful pantomime was not lost upon Major Burstrap.

'And I am told, too, the best port in the county; is that the case?' he continued, with visible emotion.

Old Bolitho again sighed and murmured, 'Wonderful, wonderful!'

'Really it is a thousand pities,' said Major Burstrap, in a beautiful spirit of Christian meekness, 'that this unfortunate antipathy to us should be allowed to exist a day longer. It makes one feel positively uncomfortable to know that we are objects of such undying rancour. One so seldom comes, nowadays, across really good port that— Dear me, I mean it is our duty as Christian gentlemen to do everything in our power to remove this impression. That was what I was going to say, when you so unceremoniously interrupted me, Smithers.'

'I didn't say anything, Major,' replied little Ensign Smithers very meekly.

'No, but you *looked* as if you were going to, and that is quite as disconcerting—more so, in fact. Don't do it again, my dear fellow.'

'Very well, sir.'

'That's right,' said the fat old Major, with touching forgiveness. 'Now, Mr. Bolitho, don't you think you could act as peace-

maker between your worthy Mayor and ourselves?

'When oil and vinegar amalgamate, but not until then, I fear,' replied old Bolitho. 'Nothing short of a miracle will ever alter his opinion of you. I know him well, for we were boys together. He would as soon think of asking a rattlesnake to his table as one of your distinguished profession.'

'One wouldn't care a rap, you know, if it wasn't that he had such a pretty daughter,' said Lieutenant Spoonbill.

'And such a beautiful cook,' added Major Burstrap. 'Dear me, there you are again, Smithers, throwing me completely off what I intended to say.'

'I really did not even *look* as if I was going to speak this time, Major,' expostulated the meek little Smithers.

'No, I know you didn't; but that's just where it is. I felt you were belying your looks. Now do exercise a little more self-control, my dear fellow.'

'Very well, sir.'

'That's right. Now, Mr. Bolitho, can nothing be done to convince your worthy Mayor that we are respectable members of society?'

'Nothing, Major. He's a confirmed lunatic on that point.'

It being now very late, old Bolitho tore himself away from the pleasant company with considerable difficulty. As he walked home he thus soliloquised:

'I tell you what, it's just as well my little god-daughter Florry won't have a chance of seeing that young fellow Algernon Warriner. My heart warms to the good-looking plucky youngster. What an old ass Josh Buddle is!'

CHAPTER V.

EVER since the introduction of the French cook, it was Mr. Buddlecombe's custom, when not dining from home, to repair in the evening about half an hour before the dinner-time to his snug library, opposite the dining-room, there to con over the *menu* with the assistance of Florence, who knew a little more French than he did. 'For,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, 'I always like to look before I leap.'

In conformity with this rule, Florence was at her post one evening about three weeks after the Queen's Own Fusiliers took Puddle-ton by storm.

'Dear me,' she exclaimed as she entered the room, charmingly dressed for dinner, and glanced at the clock over the mantelpiece; 'how early I am! Papa won't be here for a little yet. I shall have time for just another read.'

Taking from the bosom of her dress a letter which she kissed rapturously, Florence broke into a dreamy monologue:

'O, if papa only knew that ever since the regiment arrived here I have been in regular communication with Algy through the postal medium of a crack in the garden-wall! and that we have spoken lots of times! If papa only knew it, I wonder what he'd do! As to mamma, she thinks Algernon perfection; but she says she would never run counter to papa's wishes, and he is, if possible, more rabid than ever against the army and every one connected with it. Mamma has certainly made a concession. "Florry," she said, "when I see Mr. Warriner a guest at your father's table by your father's own invitation, I promise you faithfully I shall throw all my weight"—and that's saying a great deal in mamma's case—"into your cause."

But I'm afraid mamma only said that because she knew the conditions were utterly impossible. Though if we could only get her on our side success would be merely a question of time, I believe; for with all papa's bluster he generally gives in to mamma in the long-run. I'm afraid this would be a very long run, though. In fact, not a run at all—more of a crawl. I told all this to Algy, and his letter to me to-day nearly takes my breath away. O, what mad folly is he contemplating! I'll just have one more read:

"Darling Florry,—I have been thinking over what your mother has said about never countenancing our engagement until I am a bidden guest at your father's table. Now, my precious little Florry, where there's a will there's a way, and I mean to dine with you and your esteemed parent, the worshipful mayor of Puddleton, this very evening. That capital old fellow, Mr. Bolitho, tells me he dines with you to-night, so we shall be quite a pleasant little party. You say you are quite sure your mother will keep her promise; and with her on our side we shall be over the stiffest fence with nothing before us but comparatively plain-going.—Your devoted and loving
"ALGERNON."

'Mean to dine with us to-night!
O, what mad impracticable scheme

can Algy be contemplating? I'm afraid his heart has quite run away with his head. How I wish I could communicate with him, and implore him to give up this insane project! But, of course, our *poste restante*, the crack in the garden-wall, won't be called at. What *can* he mean? He surely can't intend to obtrude himself by force. O no! In the first place, Algernon is too much of a gentleman for that; and in the second, it would not be fulfilling the conditions, for that would not be by papa's invitation. O, I know; he's going to dress up as a woman. No; that can't be it. He would look such a monster in petticoats that he couldn't escape detection. And then he couldn't, O, he couldn't have the heart to shave off that lovely moustache! O Algy, Algy, what an agonising state of perplexity you have thrown your loving Florry into! And to think, too, I shall have to meet papa in a few moments with a smiling countenance and a composed manner to read over that abominable *menu* to him! What sacrilege, reading a bill of fare after Algy's letter! I shall just have time for *one* more read of the precious note:

"Darling Florry—"

'O no, I sha'n't. Good gracious, here's papa coming down the stairs!'

(To be continued.)

OUR LONDON NOTE-BOOK.

I THINK it was Brunel, the famous engineer, who, whenever he woke in the morning and found London enveloped in fog, used to exclaim fervently, 'Here's another fog; now I shall be happy and well.' His theory was that fog is really the healthiest of climatic conditions, and I know that some eminent physicians are of the same opinion. Had Brunel been living, London would have been a very Elysium to him for the last month or so; for 'town' has been wrapt in a blanket of fog for a most unconscionable time. It can hardly, however, have been such horrible and depressing specimens of the genus fog as we have lately been favoured with that the engineer and the physicians I have referred to consider beneficial to health. As a safeguard against many possible evils, the *Lancet* tells us we must do our best not to become depressed. The advice is wise, but difficult to follow. Nevertheless, there is much about a London fog which is interesting—its humours are well worth studying. Mark first how eccentric and erratic is a London fog. It shows a singular partiality for certain districts at certain hours of the day—a feature which I am at a loss to account for, unless I am to suppose that this atmospheric phenomenon is under the control of the Metropolitan Police or the Board of Works, both of which institutions are peculiarly qualified to understand the natural history of 'fogs.' Be this as it may, I have witnessed often the curious

phenomenon of one half of Piccadilly lit up with brilliant sunshine, whilst the other half was shrouded in densest fog.

But there are other aspects of the London fog, which are even more interesting to the social philosopher. Who that has experienced the delicious sensation of being hopelessly lost in a fog at midnight in a lamplless hansom, and having consequently to crawl along by the kerb at the rate of a mile an hour for two or three mortal hours, trusting to Providence that he might be going in the right direction, will ever forget it, or will ever cease to be thankful for this Heaven-sent and supreme test of temper and patience? Terrible stories, too, have reached me of belated paterfamilias wandering helplessly at night round squares (thus circling the square, if not squaring the circle), seeking in vain for an outlet, until some friendly policeman came to the rescue with his bull's-eye, and guided the wanderer home. I need hardly say that the fog is a perfect godsend to many Benedicts as an excuse for irregular hours. For who but the most stony-hearted wife could reproach her spouse with being late under such circumstances? Surely to receive him back at all safe and sound is too pleasant and joyful a surprise to allow of any other feelings. I am told, too, that the effects of the London fog upon some persons thus delayed by it in their return home is occasionally such as to suggest

that as an excuse it may rank with 'the pickled salmon' which Mr. Pickwick found so exhilarating on a memorable occasion. As for the railway companies, they of course hail King Fog with hearty delight, for under the ægis of his protection they may indulge in late trains and accidents without fear of public opinion. Enough, however, to show that a London fog has aspects of interest worth studying by the social philosopher.

Mr. Henry Vizetelly, in his *Berlin under the New Empire*, has done for the German capital what Mr. Sala, in his *Paris Herself Again*, has just done for the French capital: he has given us a graphic, racy, and faithful picture of Berlin under its altered conditions. The English reader who has never visited Berlin will gain from Mr. Vizetelly's entertaining volumes a vivid idea of the humours of the Berliners in every phase of their social life; and the reader who has visited Berlin will recognise the fidelity of the sketches, and enjoy heartily the humorous and satirical touches which make the pictures the more effective.

It is not, however, a very pleasing impression of Berlin and the Berliners that is left upon us by a perusal of Mr. Vizetelly's amusing pages. The city itself, with its horrid smells and exasperating sand-storms, with its execrably paved streets and its abominable footways, offers but slight inducements to a foreigner to visit it; whilst of the inhabitants Mr. Vizetelly says, 'The Berliners are neither remarkable for the amiability of their demeanour nor the sociability of their disposition.' The inhospitality of the Berliners is supplemented by their prover-

bial ill-breeding. Mr. Vizetelly absolutely sets one's teeth on edge by his frightful description of the awful and reckless manner in which 'the ladies and gentlemen' of Berlin use their knife-blades at meals; as though they had each and all been taught from infancy to regard sword-swallowing as one of the accomplishments of polite society; whilst the want of common gallantry and politeness to women shown by the men is enough to make one blush for one's sex. 'No man,' said a lady to Mr. Vizetelly, 'rises to open the door for you when you leave the room. If cups of tea or coffee have to be handed about, it is the lady of the house that will carry them round; she will be rewarded with a *Tausend Dank, meine Gnadigste*, but the "most gracious" will be allowed to trot about all the same. You may search an hour for your *sortie de bal* in a cloak-room before one of that group of glittering beings assembled round the door will put out a helping hand.'

Of the Berliners women Mr. Vizetelly says: 'They may be safely summed up as being less handsome than the English, less graceful than the French, and less clever than the Americans. You might promenade the Prussian capital for weeks without meeting a really beautiful woman.... The worst feature of a Berlin belle is her nose. The outline of this organ, instead of being straight or delicately curved, is frequently broken by an exceedingly prominent bridge; while the end as often develops into a ball, imparting an unpleasant and vulgar expression to what might otherwise have been a handsome set of features. The face is usually fat and pasty-looking, presenting large dreamy eyes, and not unfrequently an ex-

quisitely moulded mouth, with full ruby lips, which, unfortunately, have lost their charm from the fact of the front teeth commencing to decay at an early age. The figure is generally good, though often diminutive.'

In Berlin, and, indeed, throughout Germany generally, the men take the lead in social as well as public life, whilst their wives drudge away their existence in sordid details. 'Woman in the Prussian capital,' says Mr. Vize-telly, 'has none of that politico-social influence exercised in London and Paris by the queens of the *salon*. . . . Her sole duty in life, after the nuptial knot has been tied, is to be domesticated, to wait hand and foot upon the nobler being who has condescended to unite his lot to hers, to concentrate her whole attention upon household affairs.' A terribly prosaic lot is that of the German wife. 'The German marriage,' as Mr. Vize-telly reminds us Heinrich Heine has observed, 'is not a real marriage. The husband has not a wife but a servant, and continues in imagination, even in the midst of his family, his bachelor life.' Englishwomen—and we have, perhaps, cause to be thankful for it—possess, for the most part, too much spirit to endure such slavery in wedlock.

The 'Hatch, Match, and Despatch' column of the Berlin newspapers affords much more entertaining reading than that of our English dailies. For the Berliners are not content with the mere bald announcement of a birth, a marriage, or a death. Mr. Vize-telly gives many amusing instances, from which I shall select two :

'With God's gracious help, my tenderly loved wife Sophie was safely delivered this morning, at

4.30, of a strong boy. Hallelujah! —H. KLEINWACHTER, *Pastor*.'

In the following the bereaved husband announces his future intentions with even more complacency than the young King of Spain did on his betrothal to the lady who is his present queen :

'I here give notice to my friends and acquaintances that I have just lost my well-beloved spouse at the moment she was giving birth to a son, for whom I am looking out for a wet-nurse, until I meet with a second wife willing to assist me in my grocery business.—Signed, ———.'

I could go on quoting amusing and interesting bits from Mr. Vize-telly's volumes without end, but the exigencies of space forbid me. I can only recommend those who have not yet seen *Berlin under the New Empire* to read it, and I am sure they will thank me for introducing them to a very pleasant and readable book. I must not forget to add, by the way, that the work is enlivened by four hundred illustrations, most of them humorous, which form an admirable supplement to the letter-press.

I suppose there is not at the present moment a more popular preacher in London than Canon Farrar, and his literary reputation has undoubtedly been immensely heightened by his recent works. It is hard to imagine that the author of the *Life of Christ* and the *Life of St. Paul* is identical with the writer of *Eric* and *Lyrics of Love*. But perhaps Canon Farrar's greatest literary failure was his attempt to portray Cambridge life in *Julian Home*. The learned and eloquent Canon will, I am sure, not be grateful to a certain foolish young Cantab who has revived the memory of that

failure by publishing a volume, entitled *Sketches of Cambridge in Verse*, under the *nom de plume* of 'Julian Home.' At first, I am ashamed to say, I believed the author to be Canon Farrar himself under an *alias*; but that belief was only momentary. I am not an admirer of the Canon's verse, but the author of *Lyrics of Love* could never have perpetrated anything quite so bad as this:

'Ah, the towers are still alooming,
And the wild bees still abooming,
And the deep graves still entombing
Granta's cultured ones.'

Surely this eccentric young gentleman cannot have been expecting a premature resurrection of 'Granta's cultured ones' in response to the blast of his penny trumpet!

It is pleasing, however, to find that the Muses have not yet forsaken 'Granta's stream,' and that the *Alma Mater* which nurtured Tennyson and Praed and Hankinson can still inspire her sons with the sacred fire of song. The following stanza is exquisitely touching; the poet is describing an innocent and thoughtless child playing (a sight, by the way, I do not remember ever to have seen in my time) in the quads of St. John. This child, he tells us:

'Plucking posies, little knows
That he steps above the stones
Of departed ones,
Who, in youthful revelry,
Moved in pleasure's galaxy
In the courts of John's.'

From the fact that the writer makes 'ones' rhyme with 'John's,' I judge that he must be an Irishman, and I appreciate the cleverness with which the Hibernian pronunciation of 'ones' is introduced. If this be a specimen of the poetry of Young Cambridge, Oxford must decidedly look to her laurels!

Talking of Cambridge—and as the two universities will, by the time these lines meet the reader's eye, be prominent topics of conversation in 'town,' it is permissible to introduce Cambridge into a 'London Note-Book'—there has for some time past been a curious correspondence in *Notes and Queries* on the question, 'When were trousers first worn in England?' In the course of this correspondence I have lighted upon the following curious piece of information: 'In October 1812, orders were made by Trinity and St. John's Colleges that students appearing in hall or chapel in *pantaloons* or *trousers* should be considered as absent.' What, then, were they to appear in? Not, surely, in *puris naturalibus*! nor, whatever Scotchmen may think, in kilts! No; *breeches* is (or should I say *are*?) the solution of the problem. The Dons, you know, are, and always have been, intensely conservative in their notions; and, at the beginning of the century, they looked with horror upon the 'indecent innovation' (!) of trousers. I should like to have seen the face of old Dr. Whewell if he had met any undergraduate proceeding to chapel or hall in *breeches*! Such are the changes of fashion, and so 'the whirligig of Time brings about his revenges.'

There is an old proverb—a most impolite and ungallant old proverb—which relates to the wearing of these aforesaid masculine garments by women; and the association of the two reminds me of the fact that there was a time when the Dons had as great a horror of women as of trousers. Not more rigid precautions were taken to keep Satan out of Paradise than were adopted to keep women, especially young women,

out of the quiet retreats consecrated to celibacy and study. One of the earliest and drollest of these precautionary measures is to be found among the old statutes of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, and the ideas which it suggests are so humorous that I shall make no apology for quoting it at length. It runs thus:

'We enact, by way of prohibition, that no washerwomen, more especially young ones—if men can be found *expert in the washing of heads*—shall enter the chambers of the scholars, either openly or secretly, under any pretext or colour whatever; but that if any female of their relations, or any other honest females, should desire to hold counsel, conversation, or discourse with them for any honourable and lawful reasons, the interview shall take place in the Hall, or in some other respectable place, in the presence of some other scholar, or at least some honest servant of the house, if any one can be easily obtained, *the conversation being carried on in this manner discreetly*, which matter we lay upon their own consciences. And we further enact that the scholars' vestments to be cleansed by means of laundresses shall be carried to them to be cleansed by one of the sworn attendants of the said college, whenever it may be necessary, and afterwards be brought back again, when cleansed, by him or some other, unless perchance they may have a male washer. But if the scholars *stand in need of having their heads washed or their beards shaved*, that the master shall provide a person for that purpose—the porter if possible, or some other servant of the college—who may be both able and willing to perform both offices. *It is better, certainly, that all these matters be performed by males, than that, by*

the coming in of women, anything should by any means happen to the scandal of the whole college.'

One would scarcely have cared to converse with a 'female relation' or to 'hold counsel, conversation, or discourse' with 'any other honest female' even for 'honourable and lawful reasons,' with the college-porter standing by as the representative of decorum. What would those old Dons have thought of the May Term of these days, with its flower-shows, its garden-parties, and its delightful flirtations among the shady 'Backs'? As for the head-washing and shaving by women, however, I think they were wise to put their veto upon that. Even now the 'barber's bill' is an item in university expenditure which sorely puzzles paterfamilias, who cannot understand how his hopeful son contrives to spend 7l., 10l., and 15l. in a barber's shop during a term of eight weeks! Had the university authorities sanctioned the presence of young and pretty women as professional exponents of the arts of shaving and shampooing, the 'barber's bills' of susceptible and gallant young undergraduates would assume perfectly appalling proportions.

There is a certain kind of curiosity which is usually dubbed 'vulgar,' but it could not, of course, have been this kind of curiosity which attracted a fashionable crowd to the sale of Monsignor Capel's 'effects' at Cedar Lodge. Yet that they came purely out of curiosity of some kind was obvious, for they made no pretence of buying, and the various articles of what Mrs. Malaprop would have called 'bigotry and virtue' went for absurdly small prices. Fancy a Vandyck fetching only ten

guineas! But perhaps these fashionable visitors were all staunch Protestants, and feared to purchase anything which had the taint of 'Papisty' about it. In any case, I question the good taste of such curiosity.

I will bring my notes to a conclusion with two cruel *mots* which have come to my knowledge, both very recently perpetrated; the one in London, the other in Paris, society. There is a lady well known in London society for her intellectual attainments, whose physique is slight and fragile to an extreme degree, though as a traveller she has shown herself capable of great exertion and endurance. At an evening party not long since, an eminent literary man was discoursing enthusiastically to one of the reigning belles on the splendid mental gifts of the aforesaid lady. 'She is wonderfully clever,' he went on to say, 'and her calmness of manner and presence of mind are wonderful.' The reigning beauty, who is of the Dudu type, and of what Sir Walter Scott calls 'generous proportions,' smiled sarcastically, and said: 'Yes, Mr. Blank, I grant you her presence of mind; but is it not a pity there should be such an absence of body?'

The other *mot* is as follows: At a party in Paris recently there was amongst the guests a well-known financier of fabulous wealth, who is consequently held in the highest respect. Strange to say, although at the very lowest computation he cannot be less than sixty-five, his luxuriant hair and whiskers retain the hues of early manhood. They are, in fact, as black as the proverbial raven's wing. On the strength of this

hirsute juvenility, he still affects to be—and indeed believes himself to be—a deadly lady-killer. The ladies of Paris, out of respect for his money-bags, humour this fancy of his, and pretend to take his gallantries *au grand sérieux*. On the evening to which I allude, this glossy-haired Adonis of three-score and ten was as usual the centre of a circle of pretty women, upon whom he was lavishing his gallant compliments with his wonted freedom. Presently, however, he rose, and made his way to a lady who sat alone upon a sofa. 'O monsieur,' exclaimed this solitary beauty, with a well-affected air of prudery, 'I beg of you not to approach me; it is really too compromising to be seen conversing with you alone.' 'I, madame—to be seen conversing with *me*! Nay, madame,' said the old buck, in high delight; 'you must be mistaken.' 'Ah, no, monsieur! Your adventures are the talk of Paris.' Then, with an exquisitely coquettish shake of her fan, 'Fie, monsieur! you are dangerous. I beg of you to quit me.' 'O madame,' said our septuagenarian Lothario, gently playing with his beautiful black whiskers, and passing his hand gracefully through his thick raven curls, 'O, madame, I thought *you* at least were more generous and less censorious. You remember that even his Satanic Majesty himself is not so black as he is painted, and you shouldn't therefore paint me more black than I really am.' 'O, really, monsieur,' said the lady, with a wicked smile, 'that I assure you would be impossible.' And a certain unmistakable titter from the circle he had just left apprised monsieur that the sarcasm had reached further than he could have wished. JUNIUS JUNIOR.